Lal Mani Joshi

Discerning the Buddha

What is the Brahmanical Hindu understanding or misunderstanding of the Buddha and Buddhism? Modern enlightened 'Hindus' wedded to the Vaidika/Sanātana Dharma tradition hold that the Buddha was a 'Hindu' reformer, Buddhism a 'Hindu sect'; that original Buddhist teaching was Vedantic or 'Hinduistic', and that the Buddhists have misunderstood the fulfilment of 'the Hindu religion' and distorted the original teachings of the Great Master! On the other hand, stalwarts like Swami Vivekananda and Sir Radhakrishnan also say that the Buddha is one of the makers of 'Hinduism'. The former even said that the Buddha was the greatest 'Hindu' Seer, Philosopher, Vedāntin, Karmayogin, and the only God who walked on the earth. Satkari Mookerjee has declared that 'every Hindu is a Buddhist'.

The ancient and medieval scriptures of Brahmanical Hindus, however, regarded the Buddha as a 'barbarian', an 'outcast', a 'nihilist', and a 'non-āryan' teacher of the religion of the evil age (*kaliyuga*). The Purāṇas inform us that the Son of Śuddhodana, born among the non-āryan tribe of 'Kīkaṭas', was no other than the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu who had assumed a false *avatāra* for the sole purpose of misleading demons! This Incarnation of God had criticised the Vedas, opposed the sacred Vedic ceremonies, and questioned the supremacy of the brāhmaṇas. He was pure, compassionate and dispassionate; He practised renunciation and meditation, and was very wise; many people worshipped Him in this *kaliyuga*. But He was an 'atheist', opposed to the holy Veda; He taught equality of brāhmaṇas and untouchables, men and women, and black and white castes and races. Those who followed His religion proceeded to hells!.

Such are the conflicting attitudes towards the Buddha and Buddhism in the land of the Dharma famous for religious tolerance and synthesis.

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दंडी स्वामी विमलानन्द सरस्वती
राजगुरु मठ
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वाराणसी

Discerning the Buddha

Discerning the Buddha

A Study of Buddhism and of the Brahmanical Hindu Attitude to It

Lal Mani Joshi

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To

My Parents

मातापितरौ पूर्वाचार्यौ

mātāpitarau pūrvācāryau

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Preface

I

The circumstances leading to the origin of this book are interesting and throw light on its haphazardly contents. The suggestion to write a book on "God in Buddhism" was made by my late lamented friend Claude Alan Stark of Cape Cod in January 1970 in course of our conversation in my apartment at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A. He wanted to publish such a volume in his projected 'God Series.' Convinced of my opinion that that title will be quite un-Buddhistic, he agreed to my suggestion of a rather startling title, "God's Alternative in Buddhism". (There are still two chapters bearing this title). He had perhaps hoped that the book would be in accordance with Vivekanandian or Hinduistic interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. Since Vivekananda was selected to be the main representative of Brahmanical Hindu tradition in its modern form, his treatment of Buddhism greatly conditioned the plan of the book. The last chapter contains a short section on Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity, included here solely because Vivekananda had written something on that topic also.[1]

१ अटकलो
आकस्मा
२क प्रस्ता

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[1] Several aspects of the history of Buddhist-Christian interactions have been discussed by Roy C. Amore in his *Two Masters, One Message: The Lives and Teachings of Gautama and Jesus*, Nashville; 1978. I have also seen Chai-Shin Yu's *Early Buddhism and Christianity: A Comparative Study of the Founder's Authority, the Community, and the Discipline*, Delhi, 1981; J. Edgar Brun's *The Christian Buddhism of St. John*, New York, 1971: Hajime Nakamura's *Buddhism in Comparative Light*, New Delhi, 1975; and Winston King's old book *Buddhism and Christianity: Some Bridges of Understanding*, London, 1963. One of the most important Buddhist themes which found a lasting home in the Christian civilization was the story of the Bodhisattva Siddhārtha's renunciation of His royal throne in search of the Highest Good. The legend of Barlaam and Josaphat (Sanskrit Bodhisattva, Greek Ioasaph, Arabic Yudasaf, Georgian Iodasaph, Manichaean Bodisaph, Christian-Arabic Joasaph) is found in all the languages of Christiandom "from Iceland to Ethiopia, from Poland to the Philippines." Its Hebrew and Arabic versions are also well known. I have seen only the work of David M. Lang, *The Wisdom of Balahvar*, London, 1957, and his article in

Chapters II, III and IV may form the basis of a dialogue between Buddhistic and Hinduistic participants.[1] The great theme of God's alternative, though a significant part of the book, has received a very inadequate treatment since the printed volume was intended to be of about 250 pages. The manuscript of this book was prepared during 1974-75. It remained in the possession of Claude Stark till his very unfortunate and premature death due to cancer in 1980. The book is being published as it was in manuscript form since 1975 excepting very minor additions in a few places. The preface, however, is being added now. Two indices, partly glossarial, have also been newly added to facilitate use of the book.

II

1- अन्योन्यक्रिया

(As the title indicates, this book deals with Buddhism in India and with the Brahmanical Hindu understanding of the Buddha and His teachings.) The subject of historical interactions and mutual favours between Brahmanism and Buddhism has so far been studied by scholars only casually and in a superficial way. The role of Buddhism in transformation of Vedic type of Brahmanism, resulting in the evolution of what is erroneously but generally called 'Hinduism', is recognized by all scholars though no one has studied this role in

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The Encyclopaedia of Islam, I, 2nd edn., Leiden, 1960, pp. 1215-17. Recently Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith has drawn attention of scholars to its universal religious significance acknowledged in the three Semitic traditions Judaism, Christianity and Islam. See his *Towards a World Theology: Faith and the Comparative History of Religion*, Philadelphia, 1981, pp. 7-10, 195-97. A study of the relation between Buddhism and Christianity, however, was not part of the plan of this book.

[1] Concerning Buddhism in Modern India and the traditional Brahmanical attitude to it, I have recently seen the following publications: *Buddhism in the Modern World*, ed. by Heinrich Dumoulin and John C. Maraldo, New York, 1976, ch. 9; Roy C. Amore ed., *Developments in Buddhist Thought: Canadian Contributions to Buddhist Studies*, 1979, ch. 4; and Trevor Ling, *Buddhist Revival in India: Aspects of the Sociology of Buddhism*, New York, 1980.

Apropos of the origins of Śramaṇa thought in contradistinction to Brāhmaṇa thought, the conflict between the Śramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas, and contributions of the Śramaṇas to Indian religious and philosophical thought, I may now refer also to the following two publications. Padmanabh S. Jaini "Śramaṇas: Their Conflict with Brahmanical Society," chapter II in *Chapters in Indian Civilization*, I, revised edn., ed. by Joseph W. Elder, Dubeque, 1970, pp. 41-81; and G.C. Pande, *Śramaṇa Tradition: Its History and Contribution to Indian Culture*, Ahmedabad, 1978.

depth and detail. The difference between the attitude of ancient and medieval representatives and modern representatives of 'Hinduism' towards the Buddha, Buddhism and the Buddhists is another interesting subject which has not been highlighted so far. The Buddhist responses to modern Hindu attitude to the Buddha and Buddhism also deserve a study in the context of crosscultural and interreligious studies. The nature of the alternative of God in the non-theistic vision of Buddhist religiousness is another important subject which should engage attention of scholars of religion and spirituality. All these points of academic and human interest constitute the subject-matter of this book. It is presented before interested scholars as a preliminary effort to deal with above-noted topics. In other words, this book opens up opportunity for further dialogue and discussion between the Buddhists and the followers of Brahmanical Hindu tradition.

The author owes a great debt of gratitude to Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) whose opinions are quoted repeatedly for purposes of analysis and criticism. My critique of his views has not lessened my deep regards for him. He is taken here as an undisputed leader and enlightened modern representative of the Brahmanical Hindu tradition. His views are not his personal opinions; they are representative of the modern voice of "a Hindu mind of the highest order." Next to him, as an outstanding spokesman of modern Hindu view, who comes up for reference and criticism in these pages, is Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). The author hopes that the disciples and admirers of both these worthies will understand the 'other side' of the fact that the minds of both these great masters of renascent 'Hinduism' were constantly preoccupied with the figure of Buddha and His ideas. Just as we study and rejoice in a modern Hindu view of Buddhism, we can (ought to) study and consider a 'Christian' or 'Muslim' or even a 'Buddhist' view of Buddhism. Our task is to discern the Buddha and to understand Buddhist religiousness. In my opinion, it is not incorrect to say that neither Vivekananda nor Radhakrishnan has quite succeeded in this task, in spite of the fact that of all the modern Hindus, these two intellectuals alone seem to have spent a great deal of their time and effort in the study and propagation of Buddhist ideas in their own slanted way. Referring to Buddhism with all its complex and subtle doctrines, Vivekananda once confessed that "we Hindus never understood it."[1] A study

पुनः
जन्मा
हुआ।

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, pp. 528-29.

of Hindu understanding (or shall we say, misunderstanding) of Buddhism is therefore quite in order.

III

The attitude of leaders and teachers of the Brahmanical Hindu religious tradition towards Buddhism has not been uniform and constant. Ancient and medieval leaders and teachers of this tradition had that well-known view of Buddha and Buddhism which is documented in the Purāṇas and the Smṛtis.[1] They did not have the confusing and unauthentic name 'Hinduism' (which can only mean 'Indianism') for their Vaidika tradition which came to be called Sanātana Dharma, 'Eternal Tradition,' only from the eighth century AD, even though it continued to change as centuries rolled on. They did not confuse between *Vaidika* and *Avaidika* or *Brahmanic* and *Śramanic* traditions of religion and philosophy. They could not and did not include the Śākyamuni in the assembly of Vedic ṛṣis or seers. They could not and did not admit that the Buddha was one of the founders or reformers of *Vaidika Dharma/Sanātana Dharma* even though they had appropriated and homologized as many elements of His teaching as they conveniently could, to transform their old Brahmanism into 'Hinduism.' Still in theory as well as in practice, Buddhism continued to be treated as different and distinct from what we call 'Hinduism' and what the ancients called Vaidika or Sanātana Dharma. Incidentally, it may be observed that the teaching of the Buddha also had been called *Dhammo Sanantano* or *Dharmaḥ Sanātanaḥ*, by the Buddhists more than a thousand years earlier.[2] Ancient and medieval followers of Vaidika Dharma, in all its forms whether Vedic or non-Vedic in origin and nature, knew that Śākyamuni was not an 'Āryan' or a Vedic ṛṣi, nor a member of an āryanized community. On the contrary, He was noised abroad in their sacred texts as a critic of the Vedas and sacrificial rituals, as an opponent of the caste system, and as one who had undermined prestige and power of all Brahmanical gods. Himself a Śramaṇa and founder of Śramanic spirituality which soon became a pan-Indian religious culture, Śākyamuni could not be acknowledged as a teacher either of a Vaidika, Vedāntika, Śrauta, Smārta, or of a Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Śākta, Bhaktic religion. He could not be located anywhere within the ideological structure of Brahmanical Hindu complex.

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[1] See my *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, 2nd edn., 1977, pp. xvi-xvii, 311-27.

[2] *Dhammapada*, verse 5.

The intelligent brāhmaṇas nevertheless found out not one but two quite distinct positions even for Śākyamuni in accordance with His dual function from the standpoint of champions of Vaidika and Purāṇika 'orthodoxy.' He was given a seat, though the last one, in the column of God's incarnations because His teachings had greatly influenced Vedāntika and Vaiṣṇava forms of philosophy, religion and ethics; the "Son of Śuddhodana, born among the outlandish Kīkaṭas" thus had to be given at long last a room in the divine house of Viṣṇu about the beginning of the seventeenth century AD. This was done with considerable reluctance and timidity by those brāhmaṇas who feared a protest within their community and, therefore, they added that the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu had assumed the Buddhāvatāra only as
3. a delusive trick. No orthodox leader or follower of Vaidika Dharma
मायावी need be alarmed, they assured the people, because that was not a 'genuine' avatāra.

1·असम्मति 2·साहसहीनता

The other berth did not require so much scheming and heart-searching. The Śākya Arhat had criticised the authority of the holy
4. *śruti*, the infallible Veda, divinely ordained inviolable scheme of four
अभ्रांत

5·प्रस्थापि
6·अविका

social classes, essential oblations to mighty gods, and sacrificial ceremonialism necessary for sustaining the dead ancestors. He had denied not only the existence of Brahmā/Brahman as the source of creation, the eternality of *ātman/jīva*, but also the divinity and supremacy of the *brāhmaṇas*, those gods in human garb (*bhūdevas*, *mahīsuras*), whose divinity, majesty and power are recorded on every page of Brahmanical Sanskrit literature from the time of the *Ṛgveda* to that of Sāyaṇa-Mādhava. Above all, that Śākya Śramaṇa had greatly helped in reducing to a considerable extent the principal sources of essential revenues (*dakṣiṇā*) for the maintenance of priestly brāhmaṇas by widely propagating a way of life which did not require their
7 निपुणता
expertize in *pravṛtti-dharma* and *karmakāṇḍa*. There was no question of where to place such an entirely disagreeable even though irrefutable Teacher. He was placed along with crass materialists and nihilists (*nāstikas*, *vaināśikas*, *lokāyatas*, *cārvākas*), whose teachings, if followed, will surely 'lead to hell.' Such was the dual attitude of our Brahmanical ancestors to the Buddha.

IV

The relation between Brahmanism and Buddhism was not like that between Judaism and Christianity. Some less informed people have been misled by this analogy. Jesus was born a Jew and he utilized the Jewish religious inheritance in formulating a distinctive vision of the Kingdom of Heaven and in giving to his disciples a new and refined interpretation of traditional ethical commandments. He came to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the children of Abraham. This was not the case of Śākyamuni's relation to Vedic Brahmanism or, as Louis Renou calls it, 'Vedism.' To be sure, there were no "Hindus" in the sixth and fifth centuries BC anywhere on this earth much less in north eastern Hindustan. India in those days was populated by many autochthonous peoples who were then far more numerous than Vedic Āryans and āryanized tribes and races. To say that Siddhārtha Gautama was born a "Hindu" is therefore entirely non-sensical. He was certainly not born a Vaidika. There is no evidence to think that Vedism was prevalent among the Śākyas, Mallas or Licchavis in the days of the Buddha and Mahāvīra. On the contrary, there is evidence of the progress and influence of several varieties of Śramanic religion and philosophy which had nothing in common with Brahmanic polytheism, sacrificialism, and world-affirmation. The ideologies of *śramaṇas* cannot be traced to Indo-Āryans. They seem to have been the contributions of non-Āryans and pre-Āryan people of India. The Sāṃkhya, Jainism, Ājīvikism, Buddhism, and numerous other forms of ascetically-oriented soteriologies propounded by *munis* and *śramaṇas*, together with some outstanding teachers of scepticism, materialism, realism, nihilism and eternalism flourished in that small area of modern eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar at a time when it had not been fully āryanized and brahmanized. It is not insignificant that the anti-Vedic and ascetic tendency of a few Upaniṣadic texts was inspired by the teachings of these east Indian *śramaṇas, munis, parivrājakas* and *muṇḍakas*. It is therefore reasonable to hold that Siddhārtha Gautama was born in a non-Vedic society, in an *Avaidika milieu*, in which Śramanic ideas and practices had already made considerable progress. He did not study Vedic literature under Vedic seers; His first teachers before attaining Enlightenment were two *śramaṇa* sages, Ārāḍa Kālāma and Rudraka Rāmaputra, who seem to have preached Sāṃkhya type of Śramanism. As is already well-known, the Sāṃkhya was a non-Vedic, pluralistic and non-theistic system of spirituality which traced its origin not to the Vedic *śruti* but to Kapilamuni, a non-Āryan human sage, whose followers had established the city of Kapilavastu, the headquarters of the Republic of Śākyas. This non-Vedic Sāṃkhya-yoga of Kapilamuni never became so formidable a religion as Buddhism and Jainism, and it was the first branch of Śramanism to be brahmanized and homologized. Kapilamuni was less fortunate than Śākyamuni for, unlike his Buddhist successor, he did not survive the all-consuming process of mythologization. His historicity has been completely ruined by Epic legends and Puranic myths. Śākyamuni's followers left numerous biographies and thousands of images of their Master, and millions of people outside of Hindustan took refuge in Him and His teaching who still bear witness to His historic personality. In the absence of this development, the Son of Śuddhodana would have passed into oblivion of mythical darkness as one of the several human and animal *avatāras* of Viṣṇu.

To return to the question of relation of Buddhism to Purāṇika Brahmaism of non-existent 'Hindus' in pre-Muslim India. The early medieval followers of Vaidika Dharma or Sanātana Dharma had not as yet learned to identify themselves as 'Hindus' even when they first encountered the Turks and Afghans. It is the Muslims who first seem to have used this new name for the 'infidels' (*kāfirs*), the non-Muslims, who inhabited Hindustan in order to distinguish them from the Muslims. The followers of Vaidika/Sanātana tradition came to be known as 'Hindus' only after a time when the Buddhists as different from Vaidikas had disappeared from Indian mainland, and when the Muslims had appeared on the Indian soil as rivals of the Vaidikas who then constituted the majority of those living in India. The Muslims, who used the name Hindu(s) for the Vaidikas, did not use that name for the Buddhists, the worshippers of *But* (i.e. Buddha in plastic form). Scholars like Alberūni had no idea of the origin of 'Hinduism' out of a fusion of Brahmanism and Buddhism. For the Muslim writers the Hindus were Hindus because they were the inhabitants of Hind, the country where the river Sindhu flows. They were not called Hindus because they were the followers of a tradition then known as 'Hinduism.' This last name had to wait for many centuries to be invented and used widely first in English writings.

V

The religious and philosophical history of India up to the time of Muslim conquest is largely a history of encounter between Brahmanical and Buddhistic sects and ideas. For over seventeen centuries an intense drama of vigorous ideological encounter and controversy took place in India. It stopped only when Muslim political authority and religious exclusiveness made it impossible for Brahmanical Hindus to carry on religious crusades of the type legends associate with Kumārila and Śaṃkara. Of course, Buddhism had already been completely assimilated by 'Hinduism,' and conditions for existence of Buddhist communities as different from Hindu communities had disappeared. As our great Swami has observed: "Hinduism has become so great only by absorbing the ideas of Buddha."[1] There were very few Buddhists in India for the Turks and Afghans to persecute. The task of annihilating Buddhists had already been accomplished. It has been said by Charles Eliot and Radhakrishnan that Brahmanism had killed Buddhism in a fraternal embrace. Even before them, the Swami had said that "Hinduism threw away Buddhism after taking its sap."[2] It is a false modern myth which interprets Brahmanical assimilation of Buddhism as a kind of catholicity and tolerance on the part of 'Hindus.' There is evidence of Brahmanical Hindu intolerance of and hostility towards Buddhism and other non-Vaidika ideologies. Most of the extant Buddhist images in Indian museums are damaged and mutilated because of human vandalism; not all this vandalism can be attributed to Muslim invasions or accidents. Of thousands of Buddhist texts in several Indian languages, not more than four have survived in India. Brahmanical Hindu occupation of Buddhist shrines also suggests persecution and violence. Those who regarded the Buddha as an 'outcast' (*vasalaka*) and declared Buddhists to be 'demons' (*daitya, dānava*) cannot be considered tolerant. The typical orthodox Brahmanical attitude to Buddhism is reflected in the following statement made in a sacred book of the 'Hindus': "A brāhmaṇa who enters a Buddhist temple even in a great calamity cannot get rid of the sin by hundreds of expiations since the Buddhists are heretics (*pākhaṇḍinaḥ*) and critics of the Veda."[3] Even so large-hearted and thoughtful a 'Hindu' as Vivekananda occasionally succumbed to traditional hostility towards Buddhism and the Buddhists. "The life of Buddha has an especial appeal. All my life I have been very fond of Buddha, but not of his doctrine;"[4] those who embrace Buddhism or any other religion after renouncing Brahmanism/Hinduism are naturally looked down upon: "Every man going out of the Hindu pale is not only a man less, but an enemy the more."[1] It should be remarked here that the one really tolerant man remotely associated with 'Hinduism' was Mahātmā Gandhi. But even that Mahātmā was murdered by a Brahmanical Hindu. We are not saying that the 'Hindu' tradition is intolerant; the 'Hindus' are very tolerant of those persons and opinions that do not militate against their own cherished ideas and beliefs. Generally speaking, the modern Hindus have shown great tolerance of religious pluralism. Their notions of "appreciation, acceptance, and assimilation," to quote Radhakrishnan's characteristic words, are fully illustrated by their treatment of Buddhism discussed below. In regard to the question of 'Hinduism' and other religions of the world, their conception of religious tolerance is fully represented by the opinions of Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan.[2]

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[1] *Complete Works*, VI, pp. 507-09.

[2] ibid, p. 104.

[3] *Nāradīya Purāṇa*, I. 15.50-52.

[4] *Complete Works*, VIII, p. 103.

It is our considered opinion that the Brahmanical Hindu acceptance and assimilation of much of Buddhism was an absolutely necessary survival technique. Vedism had become obsolete long before the *Mahābhārata* began its encyclopaedic career about the second century BC. Emperor Aśoka had successfully demonstrated that truly universal humane Dharma was incompatible with *varṇa/jāti* institution and sacrificial slaughter of animals, and that it had the happiness of all humans and animals as its ultimate goal. It appears to us that in the absence of Buddhism the old form of Brahmanism would not have been transformed into 'Hinduism.' Mahāmahopādhyāya P.V. Kane has shown that in order to make Brahmanism meaningful and relevant in the face of pan-Indian presence of Buddhism, the Brahmanical leaders and law-makers not only assimilated and homologized many cardinal elements of Buddhist thought and culture, they also did everything to undermine the prestige and power of Buddhism among the masses.[3] The brāhmaṇas adopted a two-fold technique: assimilation and condemnation of Buddhism. What Arnold Toynbee calls the 'philosophical plunder' of Buddhism went along with denunciation and persecution of Buddhism. The total result was a gradual decline and final eclipse of Buddhist communities, monasteries, scriptures, and sanctuaries in all parts of India. For the common people there remained no distinction and difference between Buddhism and reshaped Brahmanism or 'Hinduism'. Buddhism survived only in its hinduized (that is, brahmanized) form. The Buddhist pilgrims from numerous foreign countries who visited their 'Holy Land of Dharma' up to the eighteenth century must have been shocked to see such an unparalleled destruction of Buddhist culture and society in the very home of Buddhism. They must have been embarrassed, if some of them, like Hsüan-tsang of earlier days, knew Sanskrit, by the newly constructed formula of Brahmanical Hindu homage to the Buddha: *namo Buddhāya Śuddhāya daitya dānava mohine* (Adoration to the Enlightened One, the Immaculate One, who enchanted (or deceived) the demons and devils). Was it like saying 'love the Buddha, hate the Buddhists', or even worse than that; for the Buddha was to be 'adored' not for His wisdom and mercy, but for misleading the Buddhists! This attitude seems to have persisted right up to the nineteenth century, for neither Tulasīdāsa in his *Rāmacaritamānasa* and other works (sixteenth century) nor Swami Dayananda Sarasvati in his *Satyārthaprakāśa* (late nineteenth century) shows any better understanding of the Buddha and Buddhism. Instances of understanding such as characterized the sentiments of Sittalai Sattanar (see p. 63), a Tamil saint-poet, were very rare indeed.

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[1] *Complete Works*, V, p. 133.

[2] See Robert N. Minor, "Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan on the Nature of 'Hindu' Tolerance" in *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, L, no. 2, 1982, pp. 275-90.

[3] See his *History of Dharmaśāstra*, V, part II, pp. 913-14.

VI

An extraordinary shift in this twenty-four hundred years old attitude towards the Buddha and Bauddha-Dharma-Darśana took place in the nineteenth century with the career of Swami Vivekananda as a national leader of cultural and intellectual re-awakening. His senior contemporary Swami Dayananda did not share in this brilliant and constructive though unprecedented attitude perhaps because he knew only the Gujarati, Hindi, and Sanskrit languages. He had no English education and seems to have believed that there was every thing in the Vedas. He who could reject the entire Purāṇika group of sects and ideas had no reason to see anything good or great in Buddhism. The new awakening among the English educated 'Hindus' had come from the Western world. Those who read English, German or French languages were quick to realize the paramount relevance and significance of the Buddha and His social and ethical legacy in the task of national reform and reconstruction on an enlightened ideological foundation.

It was the merit of Swami Vivekananda to perceive clearly and completely the strengths and weaknesses of Brahmanical Hinduism as handed down to him by his tradition. He was the first to recognize and publicly declare the Hindu indebtedness to the Buddha's ideas. He saw the inseparable bond between Buddhism, Vedānta, and Vaiṣṇavism. He eulogized the Buddha and the Vedānta; he laughed at the puerile 2 myths built by the brāhmaṇas around the Buddha as an avatāra. He used strong words to denounce the ancient Brahmaṇas for their intolerance and selfishness. He reorganized the institution of monks with a view to training them for *bahujana hitāya*, for the happiness and good of all. He was an insightful visionary. He constructed a grand vision and a beautiful, harmonious and synthetic picture of Indian philosophy and soteriology 3. He visualized 4 the serene 5 and majestic figure of the Buddha established at the centre of the multi-structured, multi-faceted, and multi-coloured citadel of 'Hinduism', illuminating the entire universe with His unique wisdom, and radiating His profound loving kindness in all directions. Therefore, "I prostrate before the Lord Buddha," he exclaimed in devout and conscious enthusiasm. The other Brahmanical and Hinduistic teachers and leaders before him had merely plundered the metaphysical and spiritual wealth of the Tathāgata; and, in place of gratitude, they had given Him not a few names, such as an outcast, a nihilist, a barbarian, and a leader and teacher of demons! It was Swami Vivekananda who sincerely and devoutly affirmed the following formula: "The Lord Buddha is my Ishta—my God; He preached no theory about Godhead—He was Himself God. I fully believe it."[1] This was an unprecedented event in the history of Buddhist-Hindu encounters and a great achievement since the days of Gauḍapāda and Śaṃkara. The great Brahmanical Hindu tradition dating from venerable antiquity has produced just one honest worshipper and follower of the Buddha. The Buddhists all the world over will hold him in high regard for his work of outstanding value for the discovery of Buddhism in modern India. There is a perceptible new respect for the Buddha and Buddhism in contemporary India not a little of which is due to the great and noble work of this greatest of Hindu monks.

१-प्रशंस
कर
२. प्रति
निरर्थ
3 मोक्ष-
सिद्धां
4 अंत
में दे
, कल्पन
कर

शांत

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[1] *Complete Works*, VI, p. 227.

The attitude of Swami Vivekananda to Buddhism is thus radically different from that of the ancient and medieval followers of Brahmanical Hinduism. He is grateful to the Buddha and recognizes his tradition's debt to the Great Master's legacy. He honours the Buddha as the greatest teacher of Hinduism, as the greatest Seer, the ideal Karmayogin, the real Vedantin, the only God that ever walked on this earth. This was not the case with traditional Brahmanical teachers of earlier times; the farthest they could go to express their gratitude to the Buddha was to declare Him an incarnation of God for the evil age (*kaliyuga*) who deluded the demons and devils who were finally destroyed. The Swami thus inaugurated a new epoch in the history of Buddhist-Hindu encounters.

VII

The reader will soon discover in the following page that the attitude of the Swami towards Buddhism is multivalent. His attitude to the Buddha is one of the highest reverence and utter humility. The Buddha is his *Iṣṭa,* chosen form of the Supreme Being or God. His attitude towards the Buddhists is that they are mistaken and have completely distorted the teachings of the Great Master. We do not know how to characterize this attitude which the historians in general and Buddhists in particular will never appreciate. In point of fact Vivekananda is saying that the Buddhists are not real Buddhists because they do not know what the Buddha taught, and they have been practising what the Buddha did not teach. The third kind of attitude that one finds in the Swami's writings and speeches is still more difficult to understand because Vivekananda attributes to the Buddha tenets and teachings that are un-Buddhistic. He says that the Buddha was a 'Hindu' in the sense of a Vaidika, that He was a 'reformer' and founder of a 'sect' of 'Hinduism', and that He taught the 'Vedantic truths'. The important thing is that for the first time in the long history of Brahmanical Hinduism the Buddha is fully accepted. The authors of the story of the Buddhāvatāra had only partly
मायी accepted Him as a delusive appearance of Viṣṇu. What they failed or were unable to accomplish in order to thoroughly own and honour the Buddha was accomplished by one stroke of Swami Vivekananda's incredible ingenuity. Was it a well-conceived stroke of policy to explain Buddhistic contributions to Hinduism? Or, was it a product of a strong desire to glorify the history and heritage of the Hindus?

The wise readers have the freedom to speculate and deliberate to find an answer.

There is no doubt that the Swami had an insight into the psychology of his audience. In his speeches in Europe and the United States of America he freely praised the Buddha and stressed His ethical, rational and humanistic teachings. But he always repeated his own important and unavoidable opinion that 'the Buddha was a Hindu' and 'Buddhism a rebel child of Hinduism'. This obsession with the Buddha and Buddhism seems to have passed on to Dr. Radhakrishnan specially during his tenure as the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford. For he too had the need to present to his Western colleagues and readers that there was nothing new in Buddhism which was not found in 'Hinduism', and that Buddha was only a 'reformer' of the 'Eternal Religion' discovered by the 'Indo-Āryan' seers! But when the Swami had to address his co-religionist Hindus in India, he often became harsh on Buddhism, even on the Buddha, and openly opposed the Buddhists. Here in the home of Brahmanism he would refer to Buddhism as atheism and nihilism, and denounce the ancient Buddhists for their alleged introduction of Tantric rites and degradation of Indian civilization. Was it a Bodhisattva's skill in means? Or, was it a cross-cultural diplomacy? Perhaps it was a demand of dynamics of national reform.

1. आंत
भय, कि
२.

VIII

It is possible to think that the Swami had many good reasons for proposing a thorough-going hinduization of Buddhistic Hinduism, for assuming a Vedantic Buddhism, for transforming the Śākyamuni into a Vaidika reformer, and for falsification of the genuine Bauddha Dharma. Once again we take liberty of giving our readers the freedom to guess what those reasons were. The question that arises is this: Was Vivekananda justified in doing what he did with Buddhism? Or, to formulate the question differently; Was he sensitive towards the religious feelings of genuine followers of the Buddha? He was right in maintaining that the Hindus cannot have their Hinduism without the Buddha and a substantial portion of His teachings. But he went the absolutely wrong way when he sought to argue that since Hinduism is largely based upon Buddhism, therefore the Buddha was also a Hindu! He was right in maintaining that Hinduism is post-

Buddhistic; but he was not right in insisting that true Buddhism was Vedantic. He was right in believing that for him the Buddha Himself was God, but he was not right in denying the reality of God's alternative in Buddhism. These are some of the questions analyzed and discussed in this book. If we accept the Vivekanandian or Hinduistic theories about the Buddhistic tradition—most of the educated modern Hindus seem to accept these theories—then the modern Hindus will have to face a dilemma: "Are Buddhists Hindus or Hindus Buddhists?" If the Buddha was really a Hindu then His followers will have to be described as Hindus. Can any one in his/her senses in good shape say that the Buddhists of Japan or Tibet or Sri Lanka are Hindus? As a matter of fact, Vivekananda does not suggest that Buddhists should be called Hindus even though the Buddha cannot be excluded from the centre of Hinduism. On the other hand, since the Hindu tradition has been thoroughly permeated with Buddhist thought and ethics, the followers of that tradition will have to identify themselves as Buddhists. This the Hindus may find very, very difficult. Even Vivekananda once emphatically told his American audience that he was a 'Hindu'. The late Professor Satkari Mookerjee of the University of Calcutta is the only 'Hindu' brāhmaṇa by birth who is recorded to have said that "every Hindu is a Buddhist, inspite of all outward appearances to the contrary."[1]

The heroic effort of Swami Vivekananda to present a unified vision and a synthetic mosaic of Indian thought and culture with the Buddha and Buddhism of his conception at its centre are undoubtedly praiseworthy. Blessed is he. As a historian of Indian ideas and ideals the present author cannot accept his anachronistic views and his un-Buddhistic interpretations of the meaning and message of Buddha. The author has submitted the results of his many years of study and research in the area of Buddhist-Hindu interactions in classical India in the following pages for consideration by fellow historians of religious ideas and communities. He is aware that his views and interpretations run counter to those of the writers of the Brahmanical School. A book which contains ideas generally opposed to the opinion cherished and propagated by the majority of the people in a community is likely to generate some academic controversy. There is no reason for not welcoming such a controversy. The author will be more than pleased to revise his opinions whenever they will be found

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[1] See below pp. 241-42.

१-कालभ्रम से पूर्ण

incorrect. A study of the history of ideas and institutions cannot be scientific if it is carried on to sustain a communal approach. On the other hand, a historian of ideas is not supposed to suppress facts of history with a view to gaining favourable disposition of the leadership in his community. Past history of our community and culture is not what we now want it should have been. Our theories have a contemporary colour. If the facts of past history do not seem to go well with this colour, we should be ready to give up our theories about the past. At any rate there is no justification for ignoring the evidence furnished by ancient texts and documents merely because that evidence militates against our modern apologetics. The present volume seeks to point out some of the problems involved in an anachronistic study of the relationship between Buddhism and Brahmanical Hinduism. It is our hope that this book will inspire some readers to investigate further into the problems raised in the following pages.*

30 May, 1983 Lal Mani Joshi
Margaret Gest Center for the
Cross-Cultural Study of Religion
Haverford College, Haverford, U.S.A.

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*In a sense members of my family have been the first critics of this book even before its publication. I wish to record my grateful appreciation to my wife Janaki, for her patience with my frequent though unconscious negligence of family obligations, to our first son Dharmakirti, for assistance in the preparation and typing of Index, to our daughter Maya, for her help in correcting typescript of the Preface, and to our second son Avalok, for his occasional excitement and even amazement over the contents of the book.

CHAPTER I

Approaches to Buddhism

DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

Scientific study of Buddhism originated in Europe about one hundred and fifty years ago. Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1837) was one of the first modern scholars who discussed Buddhist doctrines at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society in London in 1827. The works of B.H. Hodgson, Alexander Csoma de Koros, and Eugéne Burnouf, together with that of Colebrooke, may be said to have started the modern discipline of Buddhist Studies.

A glance across the pages of the volumes of *Bibliographie Bouddhique* published so far reveals the enormous amount of work done by modern scholars of Buddhism in Asia, Europe and North America. Evidence of continuous and increased interest in the study of Buddhism in our times is borne out by a large number of Buddhist texts, translations, studies, manuals, anthologies, pamphlets and articles published during the last thirty years or so.

A study of modern Buddhist studies is interesting as well as instructive. In fact, acquaintance with different approaches or methods adopted in the study of Buddhism by modern scholars forms an important part of Buddhist scholarship. We propose briefly to discuss here some of the approaches and attitudes towards Buddhism that are discernible in the works of modern scholars.

Some scholars have divided Buddhist Studies into three schools: the Older Anglo-German School, the Leningrad School, and the Franco-Belgian School.[1]

THE OLDER ANGLO-GERMAN SCHOOL

The names of T.W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg stand out prominently in the list of masters of this school. These masters sought to point out that the Buddha was a human teacher of morality; they emphasized the ethical and rational elements in the Buddha's teachings; and they assumed that the Pali Canon had preserved the discourses of Śākyamuni more faithfully than any other. This school thus was confined largely to the Theravāda form of the Buddhist religion; it relied on the Pali texts for its knowledge and interpretation of the oldest form of Buddhism. *The Dialogues of the Buddha*, wrote T.W. Rhys Davids, 'constituting, in the Pali text, the *Dīgha* and *Majjhima Nikāyas*, contain a full exposition of what the early Buddhists considered the teaching of the Buddha to have been.'[1] Hermann Oldenberg wrote in a more confident tone that 'it is probably not too much to believe that the very words, in which the ascetic of the Śākya house couched his gospel of deliverance, have come down to us as they fell from his lips.'[2]

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[1] Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, London, 1967, pp. 1-3; C. Regamey, *Der Buddhismus Indiens*, 1951, pp. 244f. For an excellent survey of Buddhist studies in the West see J.W. de Jong, 'A Brief History of Buddhist

Writing in 1959, Edward Conze assigned E.J. Thomas's *The History of Buddhist Thought* to the Older Anglo-German School and remarked that 'in scholarly circles it (this school) has few, if any, representatives.' In the same year, however, Walpola Rahula, a distinguished Theravādin monk and scholar, published his best-seller, *What the Buddha Taught*. In this book he claimed to have given 'a faithful and accurate account of the actual words used by the Buddha as they are to be found in the original Pali texts of the *Tipiṭaka*, universally accepted by scholars as the earliest extant records of the teachings of the Buddha' (p. xi).

It goes without saying that most of the modern students of Buddhism, the authors of text-books on Buddhist religion and philosophy who are not themselves grass-roots scholars and cannot read canonical languages of Buddhism, and those lovers and admirers of the Buddha and His doctrines who can read only English but who insist on lecturing and writing on Buddhist principles, have derived their knowledge of Buddhism from the works belonging to this school. The common and educated people in India, Europe and America

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Studies in Europe and America' in *The Eastern Buddhist* (NS), VII, no. 1, May 1974, pp. 55-106, no. 2, October 1974, pp. 49-82.

[1] *Dialogues of the Buddha*, trans. from the Pali by T.W. Rhys Davids, part I, London, 1969, p. ix.

[2] *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, trans. from the German by William Hoey, Delhi, 1971, p. 207.

have received their notions of 'pure', 'original', 'primitive' and 'genuine' Buddhism from the writings of the same school.

There is, of course, no convincing evidence to sustain the belief that the Buddha spoke the Pali language. It is possible that the Buddha used two or perhaps three languages in His sermons and dialogues. I believe that He must have conversed with the learned brāhmaṇas in Vedic dialect which later on became the foundation of Sanskrit. While in Magadha He must have spoken a Māgadhī form of speech, and in Kosala He would have employed the language of that province. This does not mean that the Pali texts are not authentic sources of ancient Buddhism. What we mean is this that the Pali Canon contains one of the several versions of the Buddha's teachings as understood and preserved by the earliest sages and scholars of the Theravāda tradition. To say that the Pali Canon has preserved the words of the Buddha exactly 'as they fell from his lips' amounts to saying that the Great Sage was a Theravādin. Such a view is ridiculous.

It is well known that the Theravāda school came into existence more than one century after the *mahāparinirvāṇa* of Śākyamuni, at the time of the Second Buddhist Council. The collateral school of the Mahāsāṃghikas merits the same respect from modern students as is accorded to the Theravāda. That the authenticity of some of the Theravāda doctrines and interpretations of the Master's message had been questioned and criticised by the sages and scholars of the Mahāsaṃgha has indeed been recorded in the texts of the Theravāda dating from a venerable antiquity.[1] Edward Conze is right: 'The Pali Canon, as we have it, is no older than that of other schools, say that of the Sarvāstivādins. Its prestige among Europeans owed something to the fact that it fitted in with their own mood, in being more rationalistic and moralistic than some other traditions, and much less given to religious devotion, mythology and magic. The Pali Canon stresses the ethical side of Buddhism, to which Protestants would readily respond.'[2] It also stresses the empirical and intellectual aspects of Buddhism. William Hoey wrote in 1882 that 'to thoughtful men who evince an interest in comparative study of religious beliefs,

२· प्रतिपादन करना. उत्तर देना. ३·अनुभवमूलक

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[1] The *Cullavagga*, Devanāgarī Pali Series ed. by J. Kashyap, Nalanda, 1956, ch. XII, pp. 416f; English trans. by T.W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg in *SBE*, XX, *Vinaya Texts*, part III, Delhi, 1969, pp. 386f.

[2] Edward Conze, op. cit., p. 3.

4. प्रकाशित करना.

Buddhism, as the highest effort of pure intellect to solve the problem of being, is attractive.'[1] Perhaps one of the elements which attracted some European intellectuals of the nineteenth century towards Buddhism was what they called 'pessimism' supposedly taught by the Buddha. T.W. Rhys Davids, one of the co-founders of the school, insisted that the goal of Buddhism was an ethical state of the mind in this life: 'Nibbāna is purely and solely an *ethical* state, to be reached in this birth by ethical practices, contemplation and insight. It is therefore not transcendental.'[2] Little did he realize that such a position would reduce Buddhism to a tenet of this-worldliness and nihilism. No wonder that the man who described the Buddha's teachings in 1911 for the great *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* in five un-Buddhistic words as 'materialistic, atheistic, pessimistic, egoistic, and nihilistic'[3] had derived his knowledge about Buddhism predominantly from the works of the authors of the Older Anglo-German School.

दुखवाद,
वृत्ति-मार्गी,
यान;
ंतन
अत्युत्तम,
ीतिरिक्त.
शून्यवाद.
ंबंधी;
4- सिद्धां

6- आत्मवादी 5. नास्तिकता संबंधी.

Two recent works which seem to have been inspired by certain psychological strands found here and there in the Pali texts may be mentioned here: A.J. Bahm's *Philosophy of the Buddha* and Nolan Pliny Jacobson's *Buddhism: The Religion of Analysis.* These books do not share all the characteristics of the school under discussion, but like many modern Western professors of philosophy and psychology, their authors seem to have found their own ideosyncrasies in some passages of the Pali Canon. Both these books deal with Theravāda psychology and are based wholly on Pali sources in English translation. As such the very titles of these books are questionable: Bahm's book should be called 'Theravāda Philosophy' while Jacobson's book should be called 'Theravāda Buddhism: The Theory of Analysis.' Theravāda is only one of the many schools of Buddhism; the Pali Canon is only one of the many recensions of the Buddhist scriptures; psychology or psychological analysis is only one of many facets of Buddhist religion and philosophy. There can be no justification for mistaking the part for the whole. Both these philosophers have conveniently forgotten that in addition to being a philosophy, a psychology, an ethic and a system of analysis, Buddhism is, above all, a doctrine and a method of ultimate release. Moreover, the first of these authors has misunderstood the Buddhist doctrines even according to the scriptures of the Theravāda. Bahm's book[1] is based on the untenable assumption that the Buddha's teachings can be reduced to 'a single psychological principle' which he formulates in the following words: 'Desire for what will not be attained ends in frustration; therefore to avoid frustration, avoid desiring what will not be attained'. This is a common sense principle of the common man's psychology. Bahm's 'psychological principle relates to this-worldliness of desires; the Buddhist diagnosis concerns the ills inherent in *saṃsāra*, but the Buddha's final teachings are concerned with the transcendental goal called Nirvāṇa. Jacobson's book contributes significantly to an aspect of the Theravāda Buddhism, *viz.* the psychological analysis. But he goes astray when he uncritically accepts certain passages in the Pali texts as representing the original sayings of the Buddha. Further, to describe Buddhism merely as 'the religion of analysis' is far from truth. We must remind the reader that men go astray because of 'erroneous views' (*micchādiṭṭhi*). In order to write 'a convincing modern interpretation of the teachings of the Buddha' (p. 11), one has to find out first what those 'teachings' were, a task which requires a critical and comparative study of the Pali, Buddhist Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan recensions of the Buddha's words.

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[1] In Oldenberg's *Buddha*, preface, pp. iii-iv. 8. विलक्षण स्वभाव.

[2] T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, New Delhi, 1975, p. 362.

[3] J.H. Bateson, 'Creeds and Articles (Buddhist)' in *ERE*, ed. by James Hastings, Edinburgh, 1911, vol. 4, p. 236.

9- शुद्ध क्रियाह् आपाठ.

२. पंथभ्र

THE LENINGRAD SCHOOL

The so-called Leningrad School started with the works of Stcherbatsky (1866-1942). Rosenberg and Obermiller were the two other notable scholars of this school. The merit of this school was that it studied Buddhist thought on the basis of Indian, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese texts of Buddhism. Due notice was taken of the continuous and living traditions of thought in Buddhist lands while the emphasis was on scholastic literature. Stcherbatsky perceived in Buddhism 'the most powerful movement of ideas in the history of Asia.'[2] He was responsible for bringing out the real meaning of the technical Buddhist terms *dharma* and *dharmas* in accordance with Buddhist philosophy. If Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* is a fundamental compendium of Buddhist soteriological methods and principles according to the Theravāda school, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* is a fundamental encyclopaedia of Buddhist theories and techniques of liberation according to the collateral school of the Sarvāstivādins. The *sūtras* quoted in the work of Vasubandhu seem to be as old and authentic as the *suttas* quoted by Buddhaghosa. *The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word 'Dharma'* therefore should be considered as one of the most significant mile-stones in modern Buddhist studies. One may not agree with some specific views of Stcherbatsky expressed in his classic masterpiece, *Buddhist Logic*. His excessive emphasis on the intellectual side of Buddhism or his introduction of Kantian and Hegelian phrases into the study of Buddhist thought is not always appropriate. Modern European philosophy is purely intellectual and non-religious whereas classical Buddhist thought is a by-product of religiousness aimed at a transcendent goal. While Stcherbatsky was aware of this important difference, some of his admirers and followers in Indian universities are unable to discern the spuriousness of European parallels to Buddhist philosophy.

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[1] op. cit., pp. 15 and 20.

[2] *Buddhist Logic*, New York, 1962, I, p. xi.

मानान्तर

. जाल: बनावट.

THE FRANCO-BELGIAN SCHOOL

The third school of Buddhist studies has been called the Franco-Belgian School. Sylvain Lévi, Louis de la Vallée Poussin and Étienne Lamotte are the famous names in this school. The works of Giuseppe Tucci, Edward Conze, E. Frauwallner and André Bareau, to mention only a few names, belong to it. Two works on the history of Buddhism in India, those of Lamotte and Warder, are examples of this kind of Buddhistic research.[1] These Buddhist scholars study Buddhism on the basis of all the available sources, literary as well as archaeological. Warder tends to neglect the archaeological sources, though. Fragments of the Mahāsāṃghika Canon, the texts of the Sarvāstivāda, the Mahāyāna Sūtras and Tibetan and Chinese translations of the Tripiṭakas from Indian originals in Buddhist Sanskrit have now become as important as the Pali Canon. La Vallée Poussin (1869-1938) was one of the first to stress the fact that the Pali Canon informs us only about one sect of Buddhism, that of the Theravādins, and that to describe Buddhist history and doctrines merely on its basis will be an illusory endeavour.[2]

7. प्रयास

6- मायावी

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[1] E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, Louvain, 1967; A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi, 1970.

[2] La Vallée Poussin, *Bouddhisme: Etudes et matériaux*, London, 1898, pp. 4-5.

Buddhism is no longer studied merely as an ethical system. The tradition of the Leningrad School continues but Buddhist scholars now know that in the Buddhist Tradition we have to deal not only with moral and philosophical systems but also with a complex faith, Buddhology, mythology, devotion and ascetic mysticism. Anthropological analysis of myths and legends, philological and philosophical analyses of texts and tenets, the exegeses of commentators of various schools, the evidence of art and epigraphy, and *formgeschichte* or stratification of canonical documents from historical standpoint, all these are now recognized as the tools of Buddhist research. We must add to these the element of sympathetic empathy towards the ideas and ideals of the Buddhist tradition. Without this important attitude a scholar of Buddhism is likely to misunderstand and misinterpret his subject. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, the most famous European Buddhologist and one of the founders of this school, was particularly lacking in this attitude toward Buddhism. He was capable of combining with his study of Buddhism not only his Roman Catholic prejudices but also the imperialist conceit of some of the nineteenth century European intellectuals. As a result of this, La Vallée Poussin, in spite of his exceptional abilities as a Buddhist philologist and historian, could not understand the essential message of Buddhism. We will quote just one passage from one of his mature works to support this conclusion :

1- व्याख्
अर्थ-
निरूप
सांवेदनि
2.
सहानुभू

> 'On the one hand, whereas we have been for centuries trained to make our ideas clear, this was not the case with Indians. The historian has not to deal with Latin notions worked out by sober and clear-sighted thinkers, but with Indian 'philosophumena' concocted by ascetics . . . men exhausted by a severe diet and often stupefied by the practice of ecstasy. Indians do not make a clear distinction between facts and ideas, between ideas and words; they have never clearly recognized the principle of contradiction.
>
> Moreover, *we look at the Buddhist doctrines from the outside.* Whereas *Nirvāṇa is for us a mere object of archaeological interest,* it is for Buddhists of paramount practical importance. Our task is to study what Nirvāṇa may be; the task of Buddhist is to reach Nirvāṇa'[1] (italics added).

It is in the works of D.T. Suzuki, Edward Conze, and Bhikshu

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[1] La Vallée Poussin, *The Way to Nirvāṇa*, Cambridge, 1917, pp. 110-12.

Sangharakshita that the reader is consistently reminded that Buddhism is a soteriological doctrine. Those who are not aware of the transcendental quest in Buddhist tradition will find it impossible to appreciate Buddhist doctrines and practices. The 'outsider' who treats the Buddhahood as 'a mere object of archaeological interest' will not be able to understand its meaning. Without sympathetic empathy his intellect may not perceive the distinction between words (*śabda*) and their meaning (*artha*). He who deals merely with the language of texts and carries the load of words will be lost in the forest of philology. What the Europeans call 'Buddhism' is a subject of scientific and historical study; what the Buddhists call Dharma is beyond the reach of this approach.

THE BRAHMANICAL SCHOOL

To these three schools may be added a fourth one which, for the want of a better word, we have called the Brahmanical School. It is so called because its authority is partly derived from the Brahmanical literature of the first millennium of the Christian era produced by the brāhmaṇas. This literature had effected 'brahmanization' of Buddhism and acknowledged the Buddha as an *avatāra* of God; in this literature we find a picture of Brahmanism transformed into 'Hinduism' through a steady and constant process of assimilation of Buddhist doctrines and practices. Another reason for calling this school 'Brahmanical' is that the scholars of this school study Buddhism from the standpoint of Brahmanical or Hinduistic tradition. In other words, here Buddhism is viewed as a form or branch of Hinduism. It may be noted that many modern western scholars of the Older Anglo-German School and the Franco-Belgian School had also widely propagated certain aspects of the Brahmanical attitude towards Buddhism. In India, it was Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) who for the first time widely spread the refined Vedantic interpretation of the history and doctrines of Buddhism. He did this in the wake of national awakening and 'Hindu renaissance' and 'reformation'. His intention was not to start a school of historical studies nor was he an orientalist by profession. In the following chapters we will examine in detail his views about Buddhism. Here we may note some characteristics of this school.

Some of the Brahmanical scholars subscribe to the theories propagated by the Older Anglo-German School. The Pali Canon is often believed to have preserved the 'pure' and 'original' Buddhism which was not a religion or a philosophy but merely an 'ethical system.' The ancient Brahmanical thinkers understood the Buddhist system of thought as 'nihilistic' (*vaināśika*) and 'materialistic' (*nāstika*) and put it on a par with the Cārvāka system. Modern Brahmanical scholars interpret the word *nāstika* in the sense of being 'non-Vedic', 'atheistic'¹ and 'heterodox'.² The spread of 'immoral' Tāntrika practices in medieval India is commonly attributed³ to Buddhism. In almost all the departments of Sanskrit in Indian universities, Buddhist doctrines are still studied on the basis of Mādhavācārya's *Sarvadarśana-saṃgraha* (14th century AD). Śaṃkara, the Advaita teacher, is often remembered as the crusader against the Bauddhas, in India. This is one side of the picture of Buddhist history current in modern India.

1- नास्तिक संबंधी
2. ाममार्गी
3. दोषारो करना कलंक -गाना

The official or standard theory of the modern historians, philosophers, philologists and intellectuals of the Brahmanical school is that Buddhism was a 'protestant' and 'reformist' sect of 'the Hindu religion'. This hypothesis, repeated endlessly, upheld dogmatically⁴ and defended passionately,⁵ is founded on the assumption that every noble and profound idea must have originated within the 'Eternal Religion' (*sanātana-dharma*) which is 'the Hindu Religion.' The historians of Sanskrit do not harp on the theological myth of non-human origin of the 'revealed' texts. They know that the Vedas and the Upaniṣads are human and historical documents. A characteristic of their scholarship is that they do not discuss the date of the 'older' Upaniṣads nor analyse the origin of the major ideas found in these texts, especially of those ideas which constituted what Edgerton called 'the extraordinary norm' in Indian culture.[1] The Sanskritists believe that the older Upaniṣads belong to the 'Vedic Age,' whatever that may mean. Since the Buddha flourished after the 'Vedic Age' (some even make room for an imaginary 'Epic Age' before the Buddha in spite of the fact that the epics grew between BC 200 and 200 AD), His teachings are later than the Upaniṣads. They do not see the possibility that, in many instances, the later portions of the so-called Vedic texts, especially of the Āraṇyakas, the Upaniṣads, and the Dharmasūtras, may have been composed as late as the Maurya Age; and, of course, they do not want to unsettle their traditional chronology and history of the Vedic period in spite of the concrete evidence of Indus archaeology. Hardly any scholar of this school

4. दृढ़ता- पूर्वक
5. जोश

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[1] Franklin Edgerton, 'Dominant Ideas in the Formation of Indian Culture' in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1942, vol. 62, pp. 151-56.

२·समंघवाद·

shows an awareness of the importance of Jaina and Buddhist myths and traditions regarding the antiquity of *śramaṇa* thought.

Having been convinced of the hypothesis of Brahmanical origins of Buddhism, the scholars of the Brahmanical school proceed to harmonize Vedānta and Buddhism. Syncretism is a dominant characteristic of this school. Here the *Bhagavadgītā*, famous for its marvellous eclecticism and synthesis, is an authority and a model for our intellectuals. It is an article of faith with them to believe in the fundamental unity of all the religious traditions of the world. All the religions teach the same ultimate truth; therefore all the religious paths are good. This was one of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.[1] 'We Hindus accept every religion' said Swami Vivekananda.[2] 'My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be the best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism', said Mahatma Gandhi.[3] 'No country and no religion have adopted this attitude of understanding and appreciation of other faiths so persistently and consistently as in India and Hinduism and its offshoot of Buddhism', and 'the Hindu welcomes even the atheist into his fold', said Radhakrishnan.[4]

लाना.

नने
-रीति

The average educated Indian who reads English quotes these high authorities and occasionally cites also from the works of Sri Aurobindo. He cherishes a chimerical but grand and synthetic picture of 'the wonder that was India' in ancient times. Since he is not a scientifically trained historian, he is unable to distinguish between Vedic Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Puranic Hinduism. This category of educated modern Indians is an important, often effective, agency for propagating modernized notions of the Brahmanical school of history, especially among young students, journalists, and popular writers. The typical modern Hindu's apologetic attitude towards Indian culture has been ably analysed, albeit with occasional sarcasm, in a different context by Agehananda Bharati in two of his recent articles.[5]

त्य-
फ.

5-संश्लिष्ट.

6 क्षमाकरनेयोग्य 7- आक्षेपवाक्य: ताना.

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[1] See Claude Alan Stark, *God of All: Sri Ramakrishna's Approach to Religious Plurality*, Cape Cod, 1974.

[2] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati, 1965, I, p. 331.

[3] M.K. Gandhi, *Communal Unity*, Ahmedabad, 1949, p. 217.

[4] *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, 2nd edn., Oxford, 1940, pp. 313 and 320.

[5] 'The Hindu Renaissance and its Apologetic Patterns' in *The Journal of Asian*

The grass-roots scholars who passionately look for syncretism strengthen their belief in the hypothesis of Brahmanical origin of Buddhism by saying that the Buddha put old wine in new bottles, that He reintepreted the 'Indo-Āryan ideals'. They tell us that the Buddhist Nirvāṇa is identical with Upaniṣadic Brahman, that the tenet of 'not-self' is a denial only of the ego[2], the 'lower self', and not of the Ātman, and that the Buddhists have misunderstood the Buddha's teachings.

२· अहं। आत्मा·ब्रह्म.

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy offers an example of a scholar who could resort to anachronism[3] and distort[4] historical facts whenever necessary for building a synthetic whole, or forcing a comparison, or drawing a superficial parallel between two sets of ideas. A great scholar of Indian art and literature, he was less precise as a historian of ideas. In his enthusiasm for what he called 'the connected historical study of Indian thought as an organic[5] entirety[6]', he lost the historical perspective altogether. 'There is', said he, 'no true opposition of Buddhism and Brahmanism, but from the beginning one general movement, or many closely related movements.'[1]

3· पुरानै
समय
वस्तुएं
कालनि
में गल
4· मरोड़
आकार
बिगाड़
5· आंतरि
6 · संपू

We have said above that many European scholars had widely diffused[7] the theory of the Brahmanical origin of Buddhist doctrines and practices. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, for example, had found in Buddhism 'everything second-hand so to speak : mythology, doctrine, and piety[9].'[2] The Indian intellectuals also take delight in saying that everything in Buddhism existed already in 'Brahmanism' or 'Hinduism', just as English-educated and Sanskrit oriented Indians believe that everything in modern science and technology existed already in the 'Epic Age' : atom bomb, air-plane, and artificial satellite. It must be added that in his more mature works La Vallée Poussin changed his earlier näive[8] view and came to the conclusion that Buddhism had originated from a yogic and non-Upaniṣadic cultural milieu[10].[3] But very few scholars have thought of tracing non-Āryan and non-Upaniṣadic

बिखेरना
फैलाना

8-सरल 9·धर्मनिष्ठा, भक्ति·कर्तव्य-परायणता · 10 · वातावरण

Studies, 1970, XXIX, no. 2, pp. 267ff., and the chapter on 'Hinduism and Modernization' in *Religion and Change in Contemporary Asia*, ed. by Robert F. Spencer, Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press, 1971.

[1] *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, New York, 1964, pp. 219-20, reprinted, New Delhi, 1974.

[2] *Bouddhisme: Opinions sur L'histoire de la dogmatique*, Paris, 1908, p. 1.

[3] *La Morale Bouddhique*, Paris, 1927, pp. 17-18.

roots of ideas in Buddhism. Even Nalinaksha Dutt, whose works belong rather to the school of 'Franco-Belgian' scholars, believed that both Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic systems of thought had developed out of the Upaniṣads.[1] From what source the Upaniṣads derived, for example, the ideas of *saṃsāra*, *karma* and *dhyāna-yoga* is a question which perhaps falls outside the scope of scholars of the Brahmanical School.

Here we would like to mention a particular type of Indian scholar who seems to study and like Buddhism for the wrong reason. Perhaps the best representative of the grass-roots scholar who studies and writes on Buddhism as an unavoidable appendix of Brahmanism is the late Pandurang Vaman Kane. A Sanskritist of the first order and a man of exceptional scholarship, he thought it necessary to write a chapter on Buddhism in the concluding volume of his Brahmanical encyclopaedia, *History of Dharmaśāstra*.[2] In this chapter he repeated the traditional Brahmanical attitude towards Buddhism and concluded his account with a 'strongly worded (but not unjust) passage' quoted from a lecture of Swami Vivekananda stressing the alleged 'hideousness' of degraded Buddhism.[3]

२. घृणास्पद : भयंकर.

OBSERVATIONS ON 'ORIGINAL' BUDDHISM

व्याख्या करना

An examination and criticism of the views expounded by the Brahmanical scholars regarding Buddhist history and doctrines will be offered below in the second chapter. Here we will give some more attention to the problems and perspectives encountered in the study of Buddhism as a religious tradition.

४-दृष्टि विज्ञान अनुदर्शन

The question whether Buddhism can be called a religion was raised and discussed at a time when religion was identified with Christianity and the Christian church. The scholars of the History of Religions no longer consider this question meaningful or relevant. Nevertheless, a section of the professed Buddhists seems to persist in its belief that 'original' Buddhism should not be called a 'religion' but treated as a kind of 'scientific', 'rationalistic' and 'humanistic' way of life. These simple people emphasize the human side of the Buddha's personality and the ethical side of Buddhism. A noted monk and scholar of Theravāda, H. Saddhatissa, for example, opens his popular and introductory book entitled *The Buddha's Way* with the following assertion :

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[1] *Early Monastic Buddhism*, 2nd edn., Calcutta, 1960, p. 23.
[2] *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Poona, 1962, V, part II, ch. XXX, pp. 1003-30.
[3] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, III, pp. 164-65.

5. मुकाबला करना.
6. हेतु और तर्क संबंधी

'The first point to which attention must be called, if confusion is to be avoided in discussing Buddhism, is that the Buddha at no time claimed to be anything other than a human being' (p. 19). In our view the greatness of Śākyamuni lies not merely in His being a 'human being' but in His being a Buddha, an Awakened Being. No one denies that He was 'a human being'; every man is a human being but every human being is not a Buddha. If the Buddha were to be remembered merely as 'a human being' there would have been no 'Buddhism'. Born as a human being, Siddhārtha Gautama had gone beyond the state of human beings and become the Glorious One (*bhagavata*). The liberating wisdom which He had realized had transformed His status as a human being; He was no longer a man, nor a god; He had become a Tathāgata, a Buddha. This view is expounded in the Theravāda Canon itself. Consider the following passage:

'On a certain occasion the Glorious One was journeying along the highroad between Ukkattha and Setabya. Now the brāhmaṇa Doṇa was also journeying along the highroad between Ukkaṭṭha and Setabya. Then the brāhmaṇa Doṇa beheld on the footprints of the Blessed One the wheel-marks with their thousand spokes, with their rims and hubs and all their attributes complete. On seeing these he thought thus : It is wonderful indeed! It is marvellous indeed! These will not be the footprints of one in human form.

Just then the Glorious One stepped aside from the highroad and sat down at the foot of a certain free, sitting cross-legged, holding His body upright and setting up mindfulness in front of Him. Then the brāhmaṇa Doṇa, following up the Glorious One's footprints, beheld the Glorious One seated at the foot of a certain tree. Seeing Him comely, faith-inspiring, with senses calmed, tranquil of mind, in the attainment of composure by masterly control (like) a tamed, alert, perfectly trained elephant, he approached the Glorious One and drawing near to Him said this :

'Venerable Sir, are you a god (*deva*)?'

'No indeed, brāhmaṇa, I am not a *deva*.'

'Then Venerable Sir, are you a *gandharva*?'

'No indeed, brāhmaṇa, I am not a *gandharva*.'

'A *yakṣa*, then?'

'No indeed, brāhmaṇa, not a *yakṣa*?'

'Then Venerable Sir, are you a human being?'

'No indeed, brāhmaṇa, I am not a human being.'

'Who then, pray, are you?'

'Brāhmaṇa, those *āsravas* whereby, if they were not abandoned, I should become a god, a *gandharva*, a *yakṣa*, a human being, those *āsravas* in me are abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm tree stump, made non-existent, of a nature not to arise again in future time. Just as brāhmaṇa, a lotus, blue, red or white, though born in the water, grown up in the water, when it reaches the surface stands there unsoiled by the water,—just so, brāhmaṇa, though born in the world, I abide unsoiled by the world. Take it that I am a Buddha, brāhmaṇa.'[1] The word *deva* means god; *gandhabba* (Sanskrit *gandharva*) denotes a kind of celestial being; likewise, *yakkha* (Sanskrit *yakṣa*) denotes a kind of semi-divine being. The word *āsava* (Sanskrit *āsrava*) means an idea the flow of which intoxicates the mind and ruins moral and spiritual life. Four *āsravas*, recognized in the Buddhist sources, are lustful desire, longing for rebirth, speculative views, and spiritual blindness. These intoxicating[2] things are found in human beings; the Buddha is free from them. २· उन्मादक

The above passage from the *Aṅguttaranikāya* shows that the most ancient Theravādin Buddhists believed that the Buddha was not an ordinary human being. The Pali scriptures describe Him as the Teacher not only of human beings but also of divine beings; the deep, profound[3] and immeasurable nature of the Glorious One is stressed in several Nikāya passages. The impermanent and visible human body (*rūpakāya*) of the Tathāgata is distinguished from His ultimate essence, Dharmabody (*dharmakāya*) in several Pali texts. The Buddha is identified with the Dharma.

युत्पन्न, तिगंभीर

Buddhist scholars admit that Buddhism includes not only the teachings of the Buddha but also those of the Buddhist sages and masters. The sources of our knowledge of Buddhism are the holy books of all the Buddhist sects and schools in whatever language and country they exist. Furthermore, Buddhism is to be studied not only after the literary documents and artistic monuments of ancient and medieval times, but also through observation of and, if possible, participation in the practices—adoration of the Buddha (*pūjā*), meditation (*dhyāna*), recitation of holy texts (*sūtras*), visiting a shrine,

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[1] *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, II, trans. by F.L. Woodward (slightly modified), London, 1933, pp. 43-44. The Pali text may be seen in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, II, ed. by J. Kashyap, Nalanda, 1960, pp. 40-41.

1- प्रयोगात्मक प्रयास

offering alms to the monks, etc.,—of contemporary devout Buddhists. What the Buddha taught and what He claimed to be, these are extremely difficult questions which can be answered only in an incomplete and [1] tentative manner and only on the basis of a critical examination and historical study of all the ancient reports of Buddha's words. No sectarian approach can lead us to valid results so far as the question of 'original Buddhism' is concerned. But we can probably reconstruct a reasonably reliable picture of the *earliest form of Buddhism*. This can be achieved by adopting the *historical method* of study and interpretation of Buddhist ideas, values, myths, symbols, and institutions as recorded in the various recensions of Buddhist *sūtras*. Doctrines common to all or most of the ancient schools may thus be considered as belonging to a pre-sectarian epoch in the history of Buddhism. The task of a Buddhist historian is to find out the full extent of such common doctrines and practices as can be assigned to a period before the Second Council which resulted in the birth of the Theravāda and the Mahāsaṃgha.

Stanislav Schayer[1] has suggested the possibility of reconstructing some form of what he called 'Precanonical Buddhism.' He points out that the 'Hīnayānist Sūtras' contain some texts of 'contradictory, non-canonical character.' These texts seem to have been handed down from an old, 'precanonical' tradition which could not be suppressed by the editors of the Pali Canon. The positive descriptions of Nirvāṇa, the conception of the Buddha as a supernatural Tathāgata identical with the [2] supramundane principle (Dharma), the idea of consciousness (*vijñāna*) as a durable element which [3] transmigrates, the numerous [4] allusions to 'person' (*pudgala*), and the identification of Nirvāṇa with an absolute 'invisible' (*anidarśanam*), 'infinite' (*anantam*), and [5] luminous 'consciousness' (*vijñānam*), etc., belong to a positive [6] ontology which is opposed to that found in the Pali *sūtras*. On the other hand, these ontological ideas are developed in the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. 'We now know', he observes, 'that Mahāyānism does not necessarily represent a younger stage of evolution and that in many respects it has preserved old elements more truthfully than Hīnayānism.'[2] He thinks that originally all the texts (*sūtras*) preserved in the Buddhist literature possessed only one direct and literal meaning (*nītārtha*),

2: विश्वोप
3 पुनर्ज

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[1] St. Schayer, 'Precanonical Buddhism', *Archiv Orientalni*, Prague, 1935, VII, pp. 121-32.

[2] ibid, pp. 124-25.

4: संकेत से उल्लिखित 5· ज्योत्स्नायुक्त 6· दर्शनया सत्यवि

१- अर्थ निरूपणाकार

and that the tradition of a symbolical interpretation (*neyārtha*) was introduced by later Buddhist exegetes. This may explain why one and the same text is interpreted differently by different schools. Schayer draws attention to the *Ṣaḍdhātusūtra* and its tenet that personality consists of six elements: earth, water, air, fire, ether (*ākāśa*), and consciousness. This tenet is opposed to the Abhidharma theory, and the meaning of ether (*ākāśa*) is differently understood by the Theravādins and the Sarvāstivādins. According to him the doctrines of *pudgalanairātmya*, *śūnyatā*, and *vijñaptimātratā* probably originated 'from one common substratum of precanonical and presystematical speculation in the bosom of which there lies hidden the Great *Avyākṛta-vastu* of Buddhology, the unknown doctrine of Buddha himself.'[1] The view that in several respects the Mahāyāna texts seem to be closer to the 'original' or the 'earliest' teaching has been expressed by many distinguished Buddhist scholars. Thus Bhikshu Sangharakshita remarks that 'the Mahāyāna schools have on the whole been more faithful to the spirit of the Original Teaching'; and that 'the Mahāyāna, which is born of the true seed of the Original Teaching, casts away the withered husk of Hīnayāna dogmatism only to enshrine within its heart the living vital germ of the Dharma.'[2] It is well known that the Mahāsāṃghika school originated along with the Theravāda school. Some of the doctrines peculiar to the scriptures of the Mahāsaṃgha (e.g. the *Mahāvastu*) seem to go back to a presectarian or 'precanonical' stage in the evolution of Buddhism. I personally feel that some aspects of Buddhology of the *Mahāvastu* may belong to the earliest form of the Buddhist religion. A number of ideas developed in the *sūtras* and the *śāstras* of the Mahāyāna are the contributions of the Mahāsāṃghikas. Edward Conze observes that 'in so far as the Mahāyāna 'derives' from anything it is from the Mahāsāṃghikas. Even this is only partly true and it appears that at first, far from introducing any innovations, the Mahāyāna did no more than place a new emphasis on certain aspects of the commonly accepted traditional material.'[3] The altruistic ethics of the Mahāyāna or its concern for the happiness of all (*bahujana-sukhāya*) is firmly based on the great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) so characteristic of the

पवित्र
मझकर
रक्षित
रखना.

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[1] St. Schayer, *Archiv Orientalni*, VII, pp. 131-32

[2] Bhikshu Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 3rd edn., Bangalore, 1966, pp. 117, 187.

[3] Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, 1962, p. 203.

नवीनीकरण→ 3 [illegible]करण. 4 परोपकारी सिद्धांतों से परिपूर्ण.
[illegible]ीन परिवर्तन

Buddha. Richard Robinson has made the following comment on the doctrinal position of the Mahāsaṃghikas *vis-a-vis* the Theras or 'Elders': 'The Elders claimed to be conservative, but in fact distorted the primitive teaching considerably by aggrandizing themselves and the Buddha. The Mahāsāṇghikas admitted upāsakas and non-arhant monks to their meetings, and were sensitive to popular religious values and aspirations. They were progressive innovators; two out of three basic strands in the Mahāyāna are of Mahāsāṇghika origin. Yet in some ways they remained truer to the primitive teaching than did the Elders.'[1]

१- उन्ना
कर

The great question is: What was the original teaching of the Buddha? Edward Conze dismisses this question rather curtly: 'No sane man can, in fact, say anything conclusive about the doctrine of the Buddha himself.'[2] How shall we then treat the 'authentic' words 'spoken' by the Buddha recorded in Pali and Sanskrit *sūtras* with the famous formula: *evaṃ me sutaṃ ekaṃ samayam* or *evaṃ mayā śrutaṃ ekasmin samaye?* This formula, which means, 'thus I have heard on one occasion', suggests that the discourse, which opens with it, is 'spoken' by the Buddha. Not only the Pali *suttas* and the Sanskrit *sūtras* but also the *tantras* open with this formula. The extant *incomplete Mahāvastu*, it may be noted, does not open with this formula. It is a marked feature of the *suttas* of the Pali Canon that the assemblies in which the Buddha speaks consist of human beings, monks, laymen, laywomen, brāhmaṇas, kings, ministers, warriors, merchants etc. The *sūtras* of the Mahāyāna, on the other hand, represent the Lord addressing a usually large and awe-inspiring assembly consisting not only of humans but also of numerous celestial Bodhisattvas, the liberated disciples (*arhats*), and thousands of other beings, gods, demons, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, etc. Much of this is part of 'pious fictions' aimed at inspiring religious faith and mystery. It will be a grave error to suppose that these *sūtras* contain pure inventions of later Buddhists far removed from pristine Buddhist teachings. Just as a critical historian of Buddhist culture has to guard himself against the influences of sectarian orthodoxy and monkish enthusiasm while reading the Pali *suttas*, so he has to be mindful of the supernatural and transhistorical setting and popular propagandist enthu-

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[1] Richard H. Robinson, *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*, Belmont, 1970, pp. 37-38.

[2] Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, p. 10.

1· चूणात्मक अध्यात्मवाद·

siasm of the Mahāyāna *sūtras.* Without sharing in the *odium theologicum* of the monastically oriented *arhats* and socially oriented Bodhisattvas we can understand not only doctrines common to them but also those that are peculiar to each group. It is necessary to stress the common doctrines and judicious to respect the differences that exist between the Pali Canon and the Mahāyāna *sūtras.*

विवेक-
र्ण,

In the present state of our knowledge we have to admit that even the direct disciples of the Great Sage perhaps did not have a uniform or identical understanding of the 'subtle' and 'profound' doctrines. Moreover, there is no reason to suppose that the Buddha did not expound the Dharma in a variety of ways using more than one language for the benefit of different linguistic groups among His disciples. When we consider the fact that the statements of the Buddha were transmitted orally for a considerable period of time in different geographical regions of India by the disciples speaking different languages, we can understand the rise of divergent traditions often contradicting each other. In view of these circumstances we have to satisfy ourselves with ascertaining what might be called the *earliest form of Buddhist religious thought.* All the texts claiming to have been 'spoken' by the Buddha will have to be subjected to form-criticism, linguistic analysis, chronological stratification and comparative study wherever different versions are extant; all this has to be done with constant mindfulness of the sacredness of these texts. The historian has to view Buddhism through the Buddhist eyes, he has to see the tradition from the inside.

ख्या-
ना,

भेज्ञ·

✓ The controversy whether Buddhism was originally a simple religion, a mass movement, and later on became a scholastic philosophy of intellectual ascetics, or that the philosophical doctrine of ascetics became in course of time a popular cult, a religion of the masses, is, in our opinion, futile and based on inappropriate conceptualizations. This issue, in point of fact, concerns the life and thought of Gautama Buddha. Was He an ascetic intellectual philosopher, or was He a popular religious *guru* of the masses ? These are inappropriate questions and an answer to either of these two questions is unlikely to contain truth. Śākyamuni was at once a Seer of the Truth, an ascetic sage, a philosopher, a mystic, a Teacher of the Dharma and social ethics concerned with the happiness of all, a master of meditational *yoga* and a source of profound faith and religious emotions. This view can be supported even by the authority of the Theravāda Canon.

5- विश्व का मानसिक· 6· सत्यद्रष्टा
स्वसंघ- [illegible]

The most ancient canonical texts of the Buddhists, extant in Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan, show that even the earliest form of Buddhism, as far as this can be ascertained, was both a religion and a philosophy, accessible to both the intellectual world-renouncers and the devout and pious householders. All accounts tell us that the Sage instructed not only the learned brāhmaṇas interested in theories of the world, soul and body, the wandering ascetics who specialized in sophistry and debate, but also the kings and diplomats whose main concerns were this-worldly, socio-economic and military, the gentle householders who sought religious merit in extending hospitality to holy guests, the simple villagers who cultivated fields and tended animals and dreaded spirits inhabiting farms and trees, and so on.

विद्यमान
अवशि

2. पितंडावा

The earliest *saṃgha*, the community of the faithful followers of the Buddha, included both the ascetics and the worldlings, rationally oriented philosophers and emotionally oriented devout believers. The success of the Buddhist movement lay in this that it was explained and expounded by intellectually brilliant ascetic thinkers and spread and supported by zealous and devout masses. In other words, Buddhism originated neither exclusively among an élite of intellectual ascetics, nor exclusively among the masses of simple religious people. The Buddha's teachings took care of the needs of both these groups, and both kinds of Buddhists have contributed towards the growth and flowering of Buddhist tradition. The differences between philosophic and popular Buddhism, between monastic and social Buddhism, or between the so-called 'Hīnayāna' and the so-called 'Mahāyāna' cannot be stressed at the cost of unity and integrity of Buddhism as a whole. The taste of Liberation is not peculiar to any one form of Buddhism, the entire gamut of Buddhist religiousness with all its cultural manifestations has issued from the one ultimate quest, that of Dharma. The various Buddhist doctrines and methods are just provisional means of bringing about that ultimate transformation which results in Enlightenment or Awakening. Marco Pallis puts it succinctly: 'Buddhism is *par excellence* the religion of *upāyas*, provisional means, and these have to be variable as the beings whose spiritual food they are meant to supply; but all have the same purpose in view, namely an awakening of *prajñā*, the liberating wisdom transcending all names and forms.'[1]

1. क्षेत्र-
विस्तार

3 संक्षिप्त

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[1] Frithjof Schuon, *In the Tracks of Buddhism*, trans. from the French by Marco Pallis, London, 1968, p. 8.

I cannot agree with Edward Conze's view that 'the lower goal of birth in heaven (*svarga*) was admitted side by side with Nirvāṇa' as a later concession to 'popular demand.'[1] This view presupposes that Buddhism originated among an élite of intellectual ascetics which, however, is not quite certain as he himself admits.

Two ancient Buddhist philosophers, Āryadeva and Candrakīrti, inform us that the Dharma taught by the Tathāgata can be summed up in two words: *ahiṃsā* and *śūnyatā*; the first word means compassion, inoffensiveness, universal loving kindness, and includes the entire code of moral conduct and religious behaviour; the second word means insight, wisdom, emptiness, realization of the ultimate Truth. In accordance with this twofold Dharma (*dharma-dvaya*), the Buddha taught a twofold goal: *svarga* and *mukti*, that is to say, heavenly life or good rebirth and release or Nirvāṇa, respectively.[2] This is not a view peculiar to the Mahāyāna masters; the Pali Canon of the Theravāda also supports this view. I believe, following the old Buddhist tradition, that both the ideals of *svarga* and *mukti*, the aims of simple folk and of intellectual ascetic élite, have come down to us from the oldest known teaching.

र्यरूप से
नुरूप

Apropos the controversy whether the Buddha taught existence or non-existence of the 'self' or 'person' or *ātman*, I cannot find a more decisive authority than Nāgārjuna (*circa* 100 AD). He says that 'the Buddha has taught *ātman*, self as well as *anātman*, not-self; He has also taught neither *ātman* nor *anātman*.'[3] We have to emphasize the meaning (*artha*) rather than the linguistic form or word (*śabda*), hence Frederick Streng's translation of this verse is so different from ours. 'There is the teaching of 'individual self' (*ātmā*), and the teaching of 'non-individual self' (*anātmā*); but neither 'individual self' nor 'non-individual self' whatever has been taught by the Buddhas.'[4] In order to follow the meaning of this verse we have to learn from the commentator. Candrakīrti explains that the Buddha, 'the Great Compassionate One', 'the Unique Friend of the whole world', 'the

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[1] Edward Conze, *Thirty Years*, p. 11.

[2] Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka*, XII. 23 and the commentary thereon by Candrakīrti, ed. by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 163-64.

[3] Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakaśāstra*, XVIII. 6 with Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* commentary, ed. by P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 152.

[4] Frederick J. Streng, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning*, Nashville, 1967, p. 204.

King of Doctors' conceded the existence of the 'self' while instructing those lowly beings who had been misled into an irreligious life by materialistic and nihilistic theories. He taught the non-existence of the 'self' to those superior beings who were comparatively free from gross egoism and the self-system. But those capable of grasping profound truths, by virtue of their high moral and intellectual attainments, were instructed to transcend both the notions of 'self' and 'not-self'. For the Ultimate Truth is beyond these notions. The doctrine which identifies the Ultimate Truth with an eternal *ātman* is a 'false philosophy' (*mithyādṛṣṭi*).

Apropos the controversy whether early Buddhism was chiefly ascetic and monastic or not, and whether the way taught by the Buddha was accessible to the householders also, the evidence of the Pali Canon alone is sufficient to clear the position. The Buddha, 'the Torchbearer of Mankind' (*ukkādhāro manussānaṃ*), taught the Dharma 'for the good of all, for the happiness of all, out of compassion for the whole world of beings.'[1] A verse in the Pali *Dhammapada* contains the following declaration:

'Even though a man be richly adorned, if he exercises tranquillity, is quiet, subdued, restrained, leading a holy life, and abstaining from injury to all living beings—he is a brāhmaṇa, a *śramaṇa* (ascetic sage) and a *bhikṣu* (monk).'[2]

This verse is preserved in two other ancient texts belonging to the canonical collections of Buddhists who were not Theravādins. These are the Sanskrit *Udānavarga* and the Prakrit or the *Gāndhārī Dharmapada*. The idea expressed in this verse is non-sectarian, that is to say, pre-sectarian; the *sūtras* of the Mahāyāna emphasize this idea: the Bodhisattva may live as a monk or as a householder. Vimalakīrti, the famous Bodhisattva, was a householder. Attention may be invited to a historical example of a layman, a householder, who was acknowledged as a master of the Dharma and winner of the state of an *arhat*. I refer to Citta-gahapati, Citta, 'the householder' whose character is detailed in a *sutta* of the Pali Canon.[3] Then there is the important list of twenty one laymen, 'householders', who became *arhats*, recorded in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*. Citta figures in this list also. The other twenty names are: (1) Tapussa, (2) Bhallika, (3) Anāthapiṇḍika, (4) Hatthaka, (5) Mahānāma, (6) Ugga, (7) Uggata, (8) Sūra, (9) Jīvaka, (10) Nakulapitā, (11) Tavakaṇṇika, (12) Pūraṇa, (13) Isidatta, (14) Sandhāna, (15) Vijaya, (16) Vajjiyamahita, (17) Meṇḍaka, (18) Vāseṭṭha, (19) Ariṭṭha, and (20) Sāragga. All these good men are said to have attained the 'Deathless' or 'Immortality' (*amataṃ*) through the following six things: 'unwavering faith in the Buddha, unwavering faith in the Dharma, unwavering faith in the Saṃgha, holy conduct, holy wisdom, and holy freedom.'[1] It is remarkable that their path to the 'Deathless' or Nirvāṇa did not include ascetic life of an ordained monk. This evidence shows that 'the basic structure of Buddhist soteriology and its practice do not imply that the career of a homeless recluse is *sine qua non*.'[2]

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[1] *Mahāvagga*, ed. by J. Kashyap, Nalanda, 1956, p. 23; English trans. in *SBE*, XIII, p. 112.

[2] Pali *Dhammapada*, verse 142; *Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, verse 80; *Udānavarga*, XXXIII. 1. See *The Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, ed. by John Brough, London, 1962.

[3] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, III, pp. 252 ff; *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, trans. by F.L. Woodward, part IV, London, 1967, pp. 190-91.

It is well known that the Pali *Suttanipāta*, believed to be the oldest canonical text in the Pali collection, does not mention many important elements of what the Theras believed to have constituted 'original' and 'pure' Buddhism. E.M. Hare had pointed out the following notable omissions: the Eightfold Path, the Four Truths, the Three Refuges, the Three Jewels, the Three Marks (impermanence, suffering, not-self), the five *skandhas*, the five or six superknowledges, and the four, eight or nine jhānic abidings. A reference to nuns is also lacking. He observed: 'One may well ask: why these omissions? Is it because metre did not permit their inclusion, or was the original teaching free of them? If the latter, have we in the *Suttanipāta* perhaps some of the pith *sāra* of the Master's teaching?'[3] Edward Conze comments that 'this is indeed a really startling fact, particularly when taken together with the well-known observation that Aśoka's inscriptions likewise never mention any of these items. Their omission in the inscriptions could be accounted for by saying that Aśoka, as a layman, spoke only of those aspects of the *Dharma* which are relevant to laymen. But such an argument would clearly not apply to the *Suttanipāta*.'[1] My own view is that no satisfactory conclusion can be drawn from these omissions. We have no reason to suppose that the compiler of the *Suttanipāta* should have included all the elements of the Dharma in this single collection of early and late materials. ~~G.C. Pande has shown that it is not a unified text.~~[2] Moreover, it is a text belonging to the scriptural tradition of the Theravāda only.

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, III, pp. 148-49; *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, trans. by E.M. Hare, London, 1961, III, pp. 313-14.

[2] L.M. Joshi, 'Social Perspective of Buddhist Soteriology' in *Religion and Society*, Bangalore, 1971, XVIII, no. 3, p. 67.

[3] E.M. Hare, *Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists*, London, 1945, afterword, p. 216.

According to A.K. Warder 'the Doctrine of the Buddha' or 'the Buddha's summary of his doctrines' is to be recognized in what came to be called in later literature the thirty-seven *bodhipakṣya dharmāḥ*, 'things or qualities conducive to Liberation'. The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* records that the Buddha stressed these *dhammas* in the last year of His earthly existence when He was staying at Vaiśālī. Several items included in the 'seven topics' in this text are found mentioned separately in many other *suttas* of the Pali Canon. Warder says that 'the Vaiśālī summary appears to have been common to all schools of Buddhism . . . The Mahāyāna schools are no exception.' 'That these topics constituted the basic doctrines of Buddhism as originally propounded by the Buddha seems to be confirmed by the history of the third section of the *Tripiṭaka*, the *Mātṛkā* or *Abhidharma* . . . Very likely the summary of the doctrine given by the Buddha at Vaiśālī gave rise to the idea of a *mātṛkā* and in due course to the various elaborations of it as *Abhidharma*.'[3]

The elements in this so-called 'summary' are grouped into the following seven categories:

1. Four foundations of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*),
2. Four right exertions (*prahāṇa*),
3. Four bases of supernormal powers (*ṛddhi*),
4. Five faculties (*indriya*),
5. Five strengths (*bala*),
6. Seven factors of Enlightenment (*bodhyaṅga*),
7. Eight factors of the holy path (*mārga*).

Numerous ancient authorities mention these virtues and practices conducive to Enlightenment. We have cited one dozen sources here[4] and, on further investigation one can cite nearly one dozen more sources in Sanskrit.

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[1] Edward Conze, ***Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies***, p. 7.

[2] Govind Chandra Pande, ~~***Studies in the Origins of Buddhism***, Allahabad,~~ 1957, pp. 51-65.

[3] A.K. Warder, ***Indian Buddhism***, ch. 4, pp. 80-81; see also N. Dutt, ***Early Monastic Buddhism***, p. 246.

[4] ***Dīghanikāya***, Nalanda edn., II, p. 94; ***Vibhaṅga***, Nalanda edn., p. 446; ***Milindapañho***, ed. by R.D. Vadekar, Bombay, 1940, p. 231; ***Lalitavistara***, ed.

The Pali *Vibhaṅga* states that these seven topics constitute the 'True Doctrine' (*saddhamma*). The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, however, states that the practice of perfect virtues (*pāramitā-caryā*) was taught for the followers of the Mahāyāna while the practice of the things conducive to Enlightenment (*bodhi-pakṣa-caryā*) was taught to those who were disposed to the way of the 'Disciples' (*śrāvaka*) and of 'Individually Awakened One's' (*pratyekabuddha*).

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The 'four foundations of mindfulness', in fact, consist of observation of and attention to body, sensations, thoughts and the phenomena. A *sūtra* declares that these four foundations of mindfulness constitute the single way to the purification of beings. The four right exertions deal with the production and protection of meritorious deeds as well as with the destruction and non-production of evil dispositions and actions. The four bases of supernormal power consist of the forces of exertion for concentration of will, thought, energy, and investigation. It is said that he who is endowed with these forces can live for an aeon (*kalpa*). The five 'faculties' are faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. The five 'strengths' are exactly identical with five 'faculties.' Strength (*bala*) is firm and more intense than 'faculty' (*indriya*). The seven factors of Enlightenment are mindfulness, investigation of the *dharmas*, energy, joy, serenity, concentration and equanimity. The eight factors of the way are the well known right perspective or doctrine, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is called the eightfold Path to Nirvāṇa, the fourth holy truth.

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The seven topics are, in fact, seven numerical lists. I am unable to believe that the Buddha had enumerated these lists in the form in which they are found in our sources. The repetitions are striking; thus

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by P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1958, p. 7 and pp. 132-33 (XIII. 137-38); *Laṃkāvatārasūtra*, Darbhanga, 1963, p. 11 (II.26); *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 258 where the number *saptatriṃśatsu* is given; *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, Darbhanga, 1970, p. 175; *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 97; *Divyāvadāna*, Darbhanga, 1959, p. 217; *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, Darbhanga, 1967, p. 27; *Arthaviniścayasūtra*, ed. by N.H. Samtani, Patna, 1971, pp. 28-42; *Dharma-saṃgraha*, Darbhanga, 1961, section 46, p, 331. See also T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary;* Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi, 1970, ch. IV, pp. 80ff.

3 · सचेतता स्मृति 5 प्रसन्नता, निर्मलता
4 अन्वेषण 6 चित्त या स्वभाव की स्थिरता, समाधि
7 · दृष्टि-विज्ञान

mindfulness (*smṛti, sati*), energy (*vīrya*) and concentration (*samādhi*) occur in four lists, while the first list deals only with mindfulness. The importance of *smṛti* and *samādhi* in the Buddhist religious thought cannot be exaggerated; but it is difficult to believe that the Teacher was the author of these repetitions. These lists seem to be the work of the compilers of canonical texts. It is quite possible that all the elements, minus the repetitions, were parts of the earliest or 'precanonical Buddhism'. We may include the four 'holy abidings' (*brahmavihāra*), the four 'holy truths', the three 'characteristics' (*lakṣaṇas*), the doctrine of the plurality and causality of *dharmas*, the notion of the 'middle way', the five or perhaps ten religious rules (*śikṣāpada*), the doctrine of *saṃsāra*, the ideals of heaven (*svarga*) and Nirvāṇa, and the transcendentality of the Tathāgata, in the earliest form of Buddhist religious thought. There is reason to believe that the idea of 'triple path' consisting of moral virtues (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) was later on elaborated into an eightfold path by the disciples of the Buddha.

The four 'holy truths' are sometimes reduced to two-truths: suffering and the end of suffering, that is to say, the doctrine of *saṃsāra* and the doctrine of Nirvāṇa. Since *saṃsāra* or the wheel of existence in bondage is ultimately unreal, we have to conclude that Nirvāṇa or Buddhahood is the one and only ultimate supramundane Reality. २-पिश्वो The heart of early as well as developed Buddhism is thus one Ultimate Truth (*paramārtha satya*).[1] This is called the Nirvāṇa-Dharma; the Way to it is called the Mārga-Dharma which is like a raft for crossing the ocean of *saṃsāra*, to be left behind after reaching the ३-बेड़ा Other Shore.

In his famous book, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, Étienne Lamotte discusses, under what he calls 'L' Ancienne doctrine bouddhique', the following items: the four holy truths, five constituents of personality (*skandhas*), twelve spheres (*āyatanas*), eighteen elements (*dhātus*), triple world, ten sinful actions, the formula of dependent origination, Nirvāṇa, the threefold way (morality, meditation and wisdom), the idea of the 'middle way' and the use of *enseignement intentionnel* or *saṃdhābhāṣya*.[2]

Edward Conze has discussed 'three marks' (*lakṣaṇas*), 'perverted view' (*viparyāsa*), 'wisdom' (*prajñā*), the concept of 'unconditioned' Nirvāṇa, 'the three doors to deliverance' (*vimokṣa-traya*), the four immeasurable 'social emotions' (*brahmavihāra*), the concept of the Dharma and the analytical theory of *dharmas, skandhas, āyatanas,* and *dhātus*, under what he calls 'archaic Buddhism'.[1]

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[1] See L.M. Joshi, 'Truth: A Buddhist Perspective,' *The Journal of Religious Studies*, Patiala, 1972, IV, pp. 65-76.

[2] Étienne Lamote, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, Louvain, 1967, pp. 25-57.

In recent years several Indian scholars have published good books on early Buddhism. All of them are based upon the Pali Canon and written, more or less, according to the Brahmanical approach. In these books 'early' Buddhist doctrines are studied following the Theravāda tradition and in the light of Brahmanical doctrines.[2]

The problem of approaches to Buddhism has been discussed also by Bhikshu Sangharakshita. He distinguishes three approaches: 'the sectarian, the fundamentalist, and the encyclopaedic.' The sectarian approach identifies Buddhism with the tenets of one particular school and thus commits the 'basic error' of mistaking the part for the whole. The fundamentalist approach is based upon what the Buddha 'really' taught. There are some writers who think that the whole of the Pali Tripiṭaka contains nothing but the words of the Buddha; there are others who are a little more critical or scientific and they distinguish early and late materials in the Pali Canon. Mrs. Rhys Davids offered a notable example of this kind of approach. Bhikshu Sangharakshita remarks that 'it is doubtful whether any known Buddhist text contains a line that preserves the Dharma in the same language or dialect in which it was originally expounded by the Buddha. The more strictly scientific methods are applied, the greater likelihood there seems to be that the fundamentalist will eventually be left with nothing but the Buddha's noble silence.'

The encyclopaedic approach has become popular and influential among Buddhist scholars. This approach 'emphasizes breadth rather than depth of knowledge. It tends to confuse knowledge *about* Buddhism with knowledge *of* Buddhism. It is concerned more with facts than with principles, tries to see from without instead of feeling from within.'

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[1] *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 17-118.

[2] Nalinaksha Dutt, *Early Monastic Buddhism*, 2nd edn., Calcutta, 1960; Sukumar Dutt, *The Buddha and Five After Centuries*, London, 1957; Govind Chandra Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, Allahabad, 1957; Kashi Nath Upadhyaya, *Early Buddhism and the Bhagavadgītā*, Delhi, 1971; and Vishvanath Prasad Varma, *Early Buddhism and its Origins*, Delhi, 1973.

He figures out a fourth approach to Buddhism, the 'ideal' one. 'The ideal approach to Buddhism incorporates elements from the sectarian, the fundamentalist and the encyclopaedic approaches, shorn of their imperfections.' This approach is founded on an insight into the Dharma, includes depth as well as breadth, and its scope extends to all forms of Buddhist religiousness. 'To exhibit the living spirit of Buddhism,' which is free from linguistic and geographical limitations, is the chief concern of this approach.[1]

The 'living spirit' of the Dharma consists in the avenues it offers for the growth of human religiousness aimed at Supreme Purification. The Buddha's *original teaching*, therefore, has to be recognized in all those elements of Buddhist tradition which contribute to this final Goal. Buddhism or, to quote Edward Conze, 'the doctrine of the Buddha, conceived in its full breadth, width, majesty and grandeur, comprises all those teachings which are linked to the original teaching by historical continuity, and which work out methods leading to the extinction of individuality by eliminating the belief in it.'[2]

An ancient Buddhist authority, the *Adhyāśayasaṃcodanasūtra*, teaches that the lustre of the Buddha's sayings can be recognized through the following four facts: (i) the teaching of the Buddha is concerned with truth, not with falsehood; (ii) it is concerned with righteousness not with unrighteousness; (iii) it eradicates passions or defilements, does not increase them; and (iv) it brings to light the virtues of Nirvāṇa, not of *saṃsāra*.[3] All those *sūtras* 'spoken' by the Buddha or by the Buddhist sages and masters, which contain these four features, are authentic sources of the Buddhist tradition, whatever their language and date. *Artha pratiśaraṇaṃ na vyañjana pratiśaraṇaṃ.*

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[1] Bhikshu Sangharakshita, *Three Jewels: An Introduction to Buddhism*, London, 1967, pp. 47-51.

[2] Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, Oxford, 1951, p. 28.

[3] Quoted in Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, ed. by P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 12; English trans. by Cecil Bendall and W.H.D. Rouse, London, 1922, p. 17; and also in Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā*, ed. by P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 205 on IX. 43.

CHAPTER II

The Genesis of Buddhism

HINDU RENAISSANCE AND THE WESTERN IMPACT

We will now examine the views of Swami Vivekananda and his followers about the origin of Buddhism and its relationship with the Vedānta and Hinduism. One of the foremost leaders of 'Hindu Renaissance' in the nineteenth century, his writings and speeches show considerable influence of contemporary conditions. It was an epoch of nationalistic enthusiasm, patriotic self-esteem and an awakening for political independence. It was also a period of cultural revival and religious reform. The Hindus began to discover their past heritage; they became conscious of their great religious traditions and cultural achievements dating from a venerable antiquity. Contact with Western ideas and developments had greatly contributed toward this renaissance.

The impact of Western ideas had been felt by all those Indian leaders who had received English education. The Western educated Indians had derived inspiration from the democratic revolutions of the West. The Indian National Congress had been founded in 1885. The social and religious reforms initiated by Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833), Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), and Keshubchandra Sen (1838-1884) had preceded Vivekananda's missionary work. The Asiatic Society had been founded in 1784 under the guidance of Sir William Jones. The labours of James Prinsep for the study of Indian epigraphy and archaeology had started in 1833. The pioneering works of Alexander Cunningham had brought to light several great monuments of India's past. In Europe, the study of Sanskrit language and literature had attracted the attention of many brilliant and dedicated orientalists. In 1814 Antoine-Leonard de Chezy had been appointed the first professor of Sanskrit at the Royal College of France. Before him, Charles Wilkins had published an English translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* in 1785. William Jones had published the English translation of Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā* in

1789, while his edition of the original text of the *Ṛtusaṃhāra*, published in 1792, was the first Sanskrit text to appear in print. The works of Henry Thomas Colebrooke, B. H. Hodgson, Alexander Hamilton, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, Franz Bopp, Eugéne Burnouf, Rudolph Roth, F. Max Müller, H. H. Wilson, Theodor Aufrecht, T. W. Rhys Davids, G. Bühler, H. Jacobi, H. Oldenberg, and many other English, French and German orientalists had founded the tradition of scientific and systematic study of Indian literatures, languages, religions and philosophies. Modern Hindus, that is, the leaders and teachers of the Hindu Renaissance, of the nineteenth century acquired a knowledge of their great past from the studies of European orientalists and Indologists.

VIVEKANANDA'S INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP

Swami Vivekananda was one of those great intellectuals of modern India who quickly read and digested as much as they could from these modern works on Indian Civilization. His extensive and numerous lectures reveal that he was continuously reading through the works published before and during his time.

A good deal of the exaggerated praise of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Vedānta, Sanskrit and Hinduism that we find in his works seems to be due to the Western interest in things Indian and 'Āryan'. But he did not accept all the views expressed by Western orientalists. He differed on many points from European masters of Indology and set out his own theories boldly. His command over the English language was uncommon and his style easy and forceful; his arguments are often traditional and apologetic. He was a teacher, a preacher, an orator, and a reformer unequalled in modern India. No other modern Hindu leader wields so much influence or commands so much respect among modern Indian intellectuals. Swami Vivekananda is an intellectual authority on Indian religion and philosophy, on the Vedānta, the Yoga, Buddhism, and the ideals of Indian culture. Although he was not a scientifically trained historian or a grass-roots scholar, he is quoted by historians, philologists and professors of philosophy more frequently than any other single authority. Let us have a glimpse of Vivekananda's views on Buddhist history and doctrines.

It has been pointed out above that he belongs to the Brahmanical School of Indian scholars. One of the characteristics of this school is that its upholders consciously and unconsciously seek to place the history and doctrines of Buddhism in the perspective of Brahmanical tradition. In order to understand the approach of this school to Buddhism we have to know its presuppositions.

२ · पूर्व कल्पना.

1 दृष्टि विज्ञान

TRADITIONAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

Swami Vivekananda's theory of the genesis of Buddhism presupposes a number of traditional or Brahmanical views. Below I reproduce some of his views in my own language as faithfully as possible giving references to the volume number and page number of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in 8 volumes.[1]

The religion of the Hindus is based upon the Vedas which are eternal, without beginning and without end (I.6,448). The Vedas contain the pith of all religions (I.329). The Vedas or the *śruti* means the Upaniṣads (III.395). All that is needed for man's perfection is there in the Vedas. 'You cannot find anything new' (III.249-250). Hinduism is the most satisfactory religion in the world, and Advaita Vedānta is 'the crest-jewel of all spiritual thought' (III. 432,448). The Vedānta alone is fitted to become the universal religion of man; Vedānta had reached China, Persia and the Far East before Buddhism (III.182, 275). All the systems of Indian thought are based on the Upaniṣads; the impact of Indian (Vedantic or Hinduistic) thought can be seen in Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato (III.434). Christianity is influenced by Indian thought; all religious thought posterior to the Vedas, in every part of the world, is derived from the Vedas (III. 275; V. 315). Sanskrit is the divine language, the language of God and of gods. It originated in 5000 BC. The Upaniṣads are older than this, at least as old as 7000 BC (I.446). Kṛṣṇa flourished three thousand years before Christ (I.456), while Patañjali, the author of the *Yoga-sūtras*, lived in the fourteenth century BC (II.27). The 'Hindus' are 'Āryans'; the word 'Ārya' applies to all 'Hindus,' Sanskrit-speaking and Tamil-speaking (IV.301).

All the ideas which are elaborated in the Upaniṣads are found already in the Vedic *saṃhitās* (II. 105). All the systems of the Hindu philosophy originate from the Vedānta or Upaniṣads (II.239). The

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[1] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati memorial edition, Calcutta, I, 11th edn., 1962; II, 11th edn., 1968; III, 9th edn., 1964; IV, 9th edn., 1966; V, 8th edn., 1964; VI, 8th edn., 1968; VII, 6th edn., 1964; VIII, 4th edn., 1964.

Vedānta philosophy really comprises all the various sects existing in India (I.357). 'There never were two religions. It is the same religion presenting different aspects in different places' (I.438). All the religions of the world are 'really one' (III.357). These, then, are some of the fundamental presuppositions of the Swami.

THE GENESIS OF BUDDHISM STATED

Vivekananda takes great pains to show that Buddhism is really a branch of Hinduism. By Hinduism he means the religion of the Vedas; by the Vedas he means the Upaniṣads. In other words, in his theory real Hinduism is the Vedānta of the old Upaniṣads.

'Buddhism is one of our sects' (IV.135). 'Buddha was one of the *saṃnyāsins* of the Vedānta. He started a new sect, just as others are started today. The ideas which now are called Buddhism were not his. They were much more ancient' (V.309). In other words, the ideas and ideals which form Buddhism were not derived from the Buddha, but from the Vedas or the Upaniṣads. The practical yoga-perception form of the Advaita Vedānta is called Buddhism (V. 82). All the great ideas of the Buddha's teaching are found in the Vedas or the Upaniṣads (VI. 225, 227). This is one strand in the theory, that all the essential doctrines of the Buddha were 'borrowed' from the Upaniṣads (III. 230).

A second strand in this theory treats Buddhism as a protestant movement within Brahmanism. 'Ours is the religion of which Buddhism with all its greatness is a rebel child, and of which Christianity is a very patchy imitation' (III. 275). In other words, Buddhism originated as a revolt against Vedic sacrifices, priest-crafts and casteism. Buddhism is also called a 'heterodox' sect or system because it did not accept the authority of the Vedas. The Buddha denied the Vedas because there is so much *hiṃsā* (killing) in them. But he had no right to do so. 'Buddha, we may say now, ought to have understood the harmony of religions. He introduced sectarianism' (II.238; III.323; IV. 135; VI. 120).

Occasionally Vivekananda traces the origin of Buddhist movement to a conflict between the brāhmaṇas or the priestly class, and the kṣatriyas or the ruler-warrior class. Before the Buddha the religion of the Upaniṣads was 'confined to a particular caste'. He opened the gates of this religion for all. The conflict broke out 'not only on religious grounds, but most possibly on caste grounds—the fight between the two powerful factors in our community, the kings and the priests' (III. 262). According to Vivekananda the struggle between the kings, the authors of the Upaniṣads, and the priests, the preachers of rituals, had been going on for a long time. 'Its culminating point came two thousand years after, in Buddhism. The seed of Buddhism is here, in the ordinary struggle between the king and the priest; and in the struggle all religion declined. One wanted to sacrifice religion, other wanted to cling to the sacrifices, to Vedic gods, etc. Buddhism broke the chains of the masses. All castes and creeds alike became equal in a minute' (I.455). From this standpoint, the Upaniṣads are earlier than the Buddha by 2000 years, and the rise of Buddhism was a victory for the kings and a defeat for the priests.

The most commonly repeated view of Vivekananda is what may be called the 'reform' theory. The Buddha was a reformer of Hinduism and Buddhism a reformist movement. European or Christian history offers easily available analogy, and our Swami is quick to pick up this. He is responsible for introducing the notions of 'protestant movement' and 'reformation' in the study of India's religious history. Swami Vivekananda and his distinguished follower Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan have done much through their popular writings and beautiful oratories to thoroughly propagate the theory of 'reform' and 'fulfilment'.

Vivekananda says that the relation between Hinduism and Buddhism is nearly the same as between Judaism and Christianity. Jesus was a Jew, 'Shakya Muni was a Hindu'. But while the Jews rejected Jesus Christ, 'the Hindus have accepted Shakya Muni as God and worship him. But the real difference that we Hindus want to show between modern Buddhism and what we should understand as the teachings of Lord Buddha lies principally in this: Shakya Muni came to preach nothing new. He also like Jesus, came to fulfil and not to destroy . . . As the Jew did not understand the fulfilment of the Old Testament, so the Buddhist did not understand the fulfilment of the truths of the Hindu religion. Again, I repeat, Shakya Muni came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus' (I. 21). The Buddha brought out 'the truths from the hidden Vedas' (I. 22). Repetition is a characteristic of the Swami's style. He repeats his favourite view often unnecessarily. 'Buddhism which is the religion of more than two-third of the human family, was not founded as an entirely new religion, but rather as a reformation which carried off the corruption of the times' (II 496). The 'corruption' had two aspects: rigid system of castes and organized ritualism or priestcraft. 'In order to understand Buddhism fully we must go back to the mother religion from which it came.' He is careful in making the just distinction between two 'parts' of the Vedas: the first part contains sacrificial and ritualistic religion: it deals with the *karmakāṇḍa*; the second 'part' consists of the Vedānta, the Upaniṣads; it denounces sacrifices and rituals. Besides the sacrificial ritualism, there was the caste system taught in the Vedas. This system of social divisions had degenerated into rigid casteism. 'At this time Buddha was born, and his religion is therefore the culmination of an attempt at a religious and social reformation' (II. 507-509). And finally, we should also repeat, 'the aim of Buddhism was reform of the Vedic religion by standing against ceremonials requiring offerings of animals, against hereditary caste and exclusive priest-hood, and against belief in impermanent souls' (VI. 161).

In order to support this theory we may reproduce the opinion of Radhakrishnan who is deeply influenced by it although he does not refer to Swami Vivekananda. One can clearly recognise this influence in the following lines:

'The Buddha did not feel that he was announcing a new religion. He was born, grew up, and died a Hindu. He was restating with a new emphasis the ancient ideals of the Indo-Āryan civilization.' Like Vivekananda, he also repeats his favourite view thrice in a single article: 'Buddhism did not start as a new and independent religion. It was an offshoot of the more ancient faith of the Hindus, perhaps a schism or a heresy. While on the fundamentals of metaphysics and ethics the Buddha agreed with the faith he inherited, he protested against certain practices which were in vogue at the time. He refused to acquiesce in the Vedic ceremonialism' 'The Buddha's main object was to bring about a reformation in religious practices and a return to the basic principles.' 'The Buddha utilized the Hindu inheritance to correct some of its expressions. He came to fulfil, not to destroy.'[1]

आत्म-
विद्या
दर्शन

This 'reform' theory of the Brahmanical School may be strengthened further by quoting a similar opinion of a high authority. I refer to Pandurang Vaman Kane who was perhaps the greatest

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[1] *2500 Years of Buddhism*, ed. by P.V. Bapat, New Delhi, 1956, foreword, pp. ix, xii-xiv.

१-विश्व-उत्पत्ति की विद्या संबंधित

modern *paṇḍita* and an unsurpassed historian of Hinduism. 'Buddha was', says he, 'only a great reformer of the Hindu religion as practised in his time. He did not feel or claim that he was forming a new religion, nor did he renounce the Hindu religion and all its practices and beliefs. The Buddha referred to the Vedas and Hindu sages with honour in some of his sermons. He recognized the importance of Yogic practices and meditation. His teaching took over several beliefs current among the Hindus in his day such as the doctrine of karma and rebirth and cosmological theories. A substantial portion of the teaching of Buddha formed part of the tenets of the Upaniṣadic period.' As for the date of the Upaniṣads, he observes as follows : 'It is generally held by all Sanskrit scholars that at least the oldest Upaniṣads like the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya* are earlier than Buddha, that they do not refer to the Buddha or to his teaching or to the piṭakas. On the other hand, though in dozens of suttas meetings of brāhmaṇas and Buddha or his disciples and missionaries are reported they almost always seem to be marked by courtesy on both sides. No meetings are recorded in the early Pali Texts or Brahmanical Texts about Śākyans condemning the tenets of ancient Brahmanism or about brāhmaṇas censuring the Bauddha heterodoxy. Besides, in all these meetings and talks, the central Upaniṣad conception of the immanence of *brahma* is never attacked by Buddha or by the early propagators of Buddhism.'[1] In support of the theory that the Buddha continued the tradition of ancient Vedic and Brahmanic seers, Kane and Radhakrishnan have quoted a passage from a canonical text in the Pali. I quote this passage after Kane :

'Even so have I, O Bhikkhus, seen an ancient path, an ancient road, followed by rightly enlightened persons of former times. And what, O Bhikkhus, is that ancient path, that ancient road, followed by the rightly enlightened ones of former times ? Just this very Noble Eightfold Path, viz., right views . . . This, O Bhikkhus, is that ancient path, that ancient road, followed by the rightly enlightened ones of former times. Along that (path) I have gone and while going along that path, I have fully come to know old age and death . . . Having come to know it fully, I have told it to the monks, the nuns, the lay followers, men and women, this *brahmacarya* is prosperous, flourishing, widespread, widely known, has become popular, and made manifest well by gods and men.' Commenting on this passage, Kane remarks that the 'Buddha does not claim that he was unique, but claimed that he was only one of a series of enlightened men and stressed that the moral qualities which he urged men to cultivate belonged to antiquity.'[1]

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[1] *History of Dharmaśāstra*, V, part 2, pp. 1004-05.

We shall soon point out the context of this Pali passage and restate its real import which has been totally misunderstood and distorted by both Radhakrishnan and Kane. Here we may note that Swami Vivekananda is more faithful to the Buddhist belief in so far as he notes that Gautama Buddha is said to be the twenty-fifth Buddha. 'The twenty-four before him are unknown to history, although the Buddha known to history must have built upon foundations laid by them' (I.105-106).

GENERAL REMARKS

We have stated above, as faithfully as possible, the Brahmanical doctrine of the genesis of Buddhism out of Hinduism as set forth by Vivekananda and his distinguished followers. It is now our unpleasant but necessary task to critically examine this doctrine and see whether it stands scientific enquiry. Some years ago, I had analysed and criticised the theory of the Vedic origin of Buddhism in an essay published in Sri Lanka.[2] Many of my conclusions published then will have to be summed up again in the present study.

A question may be asked : If Buddhism really originated from Hinduism, what is the need of saying this in so many words and repeating endlessly ? Does a historical truth or an ascertained fact of the Hindu history require so much repetition and defence by such eminent Hindu theologians as Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan and Kane ? What is there in the Buddha and in the Buddhist tradition that they are sought to be owned and patronized by those who owe allegiance to a non-Buddhist, and for a long time in its history, an anti-Buddhist, tradition ? Perhaps the Buddha is too great and precious and the Buddhist legacy too rich and profound to be left out of the all-embracing multicoloured structure of Hinduism. One often suspects that the modern Hindus seek to express the indebtedness of their heritage to the Buddha and to the stream of culture inspired

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[1] *History of Dharmaśāstra*, V, part 2, pp. 1004-05 note, 1639; *2500 Years of Buddhism*, p. ix.

[2] *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, Kandy, 1970.

१- [illegible]

२- कालभ्रम से परिपूर्ण ·

by His teachings by propagating a system of anachronism in the study of Hinduism. The apologetic pattern and the endless repetition of their anachronistic theories lend support to this suspicion. Also perhaps there are 'political' and 'national' reasons for declaring the Buddha a Hindu and Buddhism a sect of Hinduism. Indeed, Vivekananda says: 'Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. Then realise what the separation has shown to us, that the Buddhists cannot stand without the brain and philosophy of the Brahmins, nor the Brahmin without the heart of the Buddhist. This separation between the Buddhists and the Brahmins is the cause of the downfall of India. That is why India is populated by three hundred millions of beggars, and that is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the last thousand years. Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmin with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanising power of the Great Master.'[1]

Unity and harmony are good things, but anachronism in the study of the history of ideas is a bad thing, to say the least.

The first and basic principle in the comparative study of religion and in the practice of inter-religious understanding and tolerance, of which the modern Hindus talk so much, is to treat each religious tradition as an integral whole in its own right, to see each religion from the inside, to study its history and doctrines from its own standpoint. In other words, he who wants to show respect for the Buddhist faith, and he who wants to have an understanding of Buddhism, must see Buddhism as a Buddhist sees it. A study of Confucianism from the standpoint of Communism will be a study of Communism rather than that of Confucianism. Likewise, a history of Buddhism from the standpoint of Hinduism will be a history not of Buddhism but of Hinduism. Moreover, to study and interpret old Brahmanism from the standpoint of post-Buddhist Neo-Brahmanism or modern Hinduism will not produce valid results. For past history is not what we, at the present time, think it should be; history is what it has been in the past, whether we like it or not.

One is astonished by the unreasonable persistence of modern Brahmanical Hindu intellectuals in their untenable anachronism in assuming the existence of Hinduism in pre-Buddhistic times. Most of them show a singular lack of an awareness of historical and doctrinal differences between the old Vedic religion or Brahmanism

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[1] *Complete Works*, I, p. 23.

3 · अधिकार में न आने योग्य
अरक्षणीय

on the one hand and the Puranic religion or New Brahmanism (Hinduism) on the other. This is not the only flaw in the Brahmanical approach to India's religious history. A more startling fact is this : the Buddhists say that they are not Hindus ; the giants of modern Hinduism go on repeating, almost with a missionary zeal, that the Buddhists do not know who they really are, that they should know that they are really Hindus and not Buddhists. To teach and preach in a hundred thousand words that Śākyamuni was not a non-Vedic *śramaṇa* but a Vedic or Vedantic teacher, that Buddhism is not Buddhism, that Buddhists are not Buddhists ; that Buddhism is Hinduism and the Buddhists are Hindus ; that the Buddhists do not know that they are not Buddhists, and that the Hindus know that the Buddhists are not Buddhists but Hindus, this indeed is a wonderful phenomenon.

१-दोष
का मो

CRITICISM OF THE BRAHMANICAL THEORY

Let us examine the validity of these views, beginning with the *traditional presuppositions*. The use of the word *Hindu* in the study of ancient Indian history and culture is wrong. This word means simply an *Indian*; any one who is born and lives in Hind or Hindustan or India is a *Hindu*. The use of this geographical term for a religious affiliation is rooted in confusion. Those who are now called Hindus follow the Vedic-Brahmanic tradition; they are the followers either of Vaiṣṇavism or Śaivism or Śāktism or a mixed religion, a mélange of several diverse elements of Vedic and Puranic origin. A substantial portion of what is now known as Hinduism is the contribution of Buddhism and Jainism, Yoga and Sāṃkhya, and of many other thought-currents of non-Vedic and non-Āryan origin. The worship of Śiva, Śakti, Gaṇeśa, Hanumāna, serpents (*nāga*), trees (e.g. *pīpala*), and several aspects of the theology of Viṣṇu, are of non-Āryan and non-Vedic origin.

२-मिश्र
खिंच

However, the use of the word Hinduism for the composite religious mélange, which is now only nominally related to the Vedic tradition, has become widespread. What is important to remember is that the modern Hindus like this name, although in the entire mass of ancient literature belonging to the Vedic-Brahmanic sects and schools there is no authority for this name. On the other hand, we have a number of ancient and authentic words referring to the followers of this or that sect of Vedic-Brahmanic tradition, such as the *Vaidika*, *Vedāntika*, *Aupaniṣadika*, *Mīmāṃsaka*, *Śaiva*, *Bhāgavata*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Śākta*, *Gāṇapatya*, *Saura*, *Śrauta*, *Smārta*, *Paurāṇika*, *Tāntrika*, etc. Nowhere do we come across the word Hindu in a religious or sectarian sense before the coming of the Muslims. In our opinion the use of the word Hinduism for any sect or group of sects of ancient India is anachronistic and unscientific. We have used it here in deference[1] to our contemporary Hindus who prefer this name to any other. But we cannot understand their use of it for those ancients who did not know this word and who had other terms more meaningful and less confusing than the word Hindu. As a matter of fact, Vivekananda feels that *Vedānta* is a truer and better word than the un-Indian word Hinduism (III. 228-229).

1 विनय, अनुरोध, सम्मान

2-आध्यात्मिक

The view that the Vedas are eternal is a theological myth, a sectarian belief. The Vedas or the texts containing *veda* or sacrificial and philosophical knowledge are, historically speaking, human creations and therefore impermanent[5]. All created things are impermanent, the Buddhists say. A section of the Vaidikas believed in the eternality of the Vedas. The Buddhists laughed at this belief and treated it as a 'false view.' It is doubtful if any one among the modern Hindus takes the dogma of the eternality of the Vedas seriously.

स्थिर, अशाश्वत

Vivekananda repeatedly says that by the Vedas he means only the early Upaniṣads and not pre-Upaniṣadic Vedic texts. His view that these Vedas or the early Upaniṣads contain the essence of all religions is again a sectarian belief which need not be taken seriously. He who believes Vedānta to be the highest philosophy will consider the Upaniṣads as the supreme scriptures, just as the Chinese communists consider Maoism as the best philosophy and the writings of Mao-tse-tung as the most authentic philosophical works. The claim that 'you cannot find anything new', that all the highest truths are already there in the Upaniṣads or in the Advaita Vedānta, is also extremely subjective. For the Hindus the Vedāntic religion may appear to be the best, for the Muslims the Islamic religion may appear to be the most satisfactory, and so on.

The view that Vedānta had reached China, Persia, and the Far East before Buddhism is clearly wrong. The influence of Vedānta on Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato and on Christianity has hardly been studied. The claim that all the religious thoughts in every part of the world are derived from the Vedas is too bold and incredible.[4]

4-अनिश्चय

If Sanskrit is the language of God or gods according to the Hindus, Arabic and Hebrew will also have to be acknowledged as the languages of Allah and Yahweh, respectively, according to Muslims and Jews. Nobody will take even a casual notice of the statement that Sanskrit originated in 5000 BC. Not even the modern Hindus acquainted with the history of Sanskrit literature will maintain such an improbable view. To place the Upaniṣads in 7000 BC is, of course, quite fantastic. Even 700 BC is too early a date for these texts.

Vivekananda places Kṛṣṇa in 3000 BC. Critical Hindu historians think that the great war recorded in the *Mahābhārata* may have taken place in *circa* 900 BC. Others have suggested 1400 BC as the date of the Bhārata War. The traditional view which places the beginning of the *kaliyuga* or 'evil age' as well as the event of the epic war in 2440 BC, 'is opposed to all genuine historical evidence.'[1] Recent archaeologists and ethnologists believe that the story of epic war reflects a real struggle between invading Āryans and the autochthonous Indians, the non-Āryan Niṣādas, Dāsas, Śabaras etc.[2] A person, named Kṛṣṇa-Devakīputra, is known to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as a pupil of Ghora Āṅgiras.[3] He may or may not be identical with Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, a scion of the Vṛṣṇi family of Mathurā, mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*. His deification and exaltation to the position of an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu and his worship as the revealer of the *Bhagavadgītā*, all these developments took place in the early centuries of the Christian era. The *Mahābhārata* in its present form dates from AD 400.[4] The *Bhagavadgītā* is included in this *Mahābhārata*. It is believed by the historians of Sanskrit and of Vaiṣṇavism that the original nucleus of the *Mahābhārata* may have originated in about 300-200 BC. At all events, the historical Kṛṣṇa cannot be older than the later Vedic age, say *circa* 800 BC.

1. आदि
निवा
सियों

The view that Patañjali, the author of the *Yogasūtra*, flourished in the fourteenth century BC, is quite baseless and should be passed over without any further comment. Modern historians place him in the second or third century AD; he was an altogether a different person from the author of the *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇinī's *sūtras*. Of the great antiquity of *yoga*, however, there can be no doubt as will be made clear in the following pages.

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[1] H.C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, 6th edn., Calcutta, 1953, p. 28.

[2] See e.g. Robert Shafer, *The Ethnography of Ancient India*, Wiesbaden, 1954.

[3] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, III. 17.

[4] For an analysis of the economic and cultural data of the *Bhagavadgītā*, see D.D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*, Bombay, 1962, pp. 12-42.

HARAPPAN CULTURE AND THE ĀRYANS

As for the identification of Āryans with the Hindus we can only say that in the days of Max Müller, Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Ārya Samāja, and Swami Vivekananda, it was a matter of racial superiority and national self-esteem to be associated with things Āryan. This is not the situation today. In recent decades there have been many land-slides in the prestige of the Āryans and the myth of 'Āryan civilization' now stands exploded.[1]

Most of the dates and conclusions of Vivekananda are no longer valid. His whole perspective of the history of ancient Indian religion and philosophy has to be modified in the light of recent discoveries and researches. He wrote at a time when nothing of non-Āryan and pre-Āryan elements in Indian history and culture was known. Scholars and Indologists in those days were under the impression that the 'Āryans' were the torchbearers of civilization; they had imagined that all the good and great ideas, ideals and institutions of classical Indian antiquity were the legacy of the Vedic 'Aryans'; the Indians of that epoch had assumed that they were the descendants of the 'Āryan' race and felt a measure of pride in this assumed connection. At a time when only the 'Āryans' were believed to be the ancestors of the 'Hindus', and when the Vedic Āryan culture was believed to be the oldest and grandest civilization of India, it was natural to assume that the Vedānta, the Yoga, and even Buddhism and Jainism were the creations of those Indo-Āryans.

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उत्तरा-
धकार
ीमत-
जा गा;

In the absence of any archaeological evidence to the contrary, the date of the Vedic literary documents was at that time a matter of individual fancy. hence the fantastic dates : 10,000 BC, 7000 BC, 5000 BC and 3000 BC. Vivekananda is not to be blamed for this. Even Sanskritists and orientalists like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Hermann Jacobi had suggested 6000 or 5000 BC as the date of the Ṛgvedic Āryans. This kind of enthusiastic wonder and groping about the early Indo-Āryans and their culture continued to persist till the discovery of the pre-

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[1] *The History of the Punjab*, ed. by L.M. Joshi, Patiala, 1976, I, introduction.

Vedic and non-Āryan civilization of the Indus Valley. The publication of *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization* in three large volumes in 1931 by John Marshall and his associates nearly put an end to this kind of groping.[1] Historians and philologists got a rather rude shock: the Ṛgvedic Āryans were cut to their size; they proved to be semi-barbaric invaders and destroyers of the great cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappā, and their pastoral and village life based on cattle-breeding and agriculture proved to be too primitive in the face of the great achievements of pre-Āryan Indians in the field of town-planning, architectural engineering, sculpture, pottery, metallurgy, the art of writing, the municipal facilities including public and private baths, drainage and the higwhays, and most important of all, in the field of religious life: the practice of *yoga* and *dhyāna*, the worship of images of the Great Goddess, the symbolism of the tree, and of animals and snakes.

The conclusion of the archaeologists is that before the Āryans invaded the Punjab, a fully developed city culture had been flourishing here for many centuries. The invasion of the Āryans is generally placed in the middle of the second millennium BC, in *circa* 1700 or 1500 BC. This is the earliest possible date for any trace of the Ṛgvedic Āryans on the Indian soil.

Let us hear the mature opinion of some distinguished archaeologists who have studied the antiquities of the Harappan Civilization. Mortimer Wheeler says: 'Some time during the second millennium BC . . . Āryan speaking peoples invaded the Land of the Seven Rivers, the Punjab and its neighbouring region. It has long been accepted that the tradition of this invasion is reflected in the older hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, the composition of which is attributed to the second half of the millennium. In the *Ṛgveda*, the invasion constantly assumes the form of an onslaught upon the walled cities of the aborigines. For these cities, the term used is *pur*, meaning a 'rampart', 'fort', 'stronghold' . . . . Indra, the Āryan war-god, is *puramdara*, 'fort-destroyer.'

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[1] See besides the work of John Marshall mentioned above, the following titles: Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, London, 1950; V. Gordon Childe, *New Light on the Most Ancient East*, 4th edn., London, 1952, ch. 9; D.H. Gordon, *The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture*, Bombay, 1958, ch. 4; Mortimer Wheeler, *The Indus Civilization*, 3rd edn., Cambridge, 1968; Bridget and Raymond Allchin, *The Birth of Indian Civilization*, Harmondsworth, 1968, ch. 6; D.D. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India—in Historical Outline*, London, 1965.

१ - आश्रित; उपजीवी,"

He shatters 'ninety forts' for his Āryan protege, Divodāsa. The same forts are doubtless referred to where in other hymns he demolished variously ninety-nine and a hundred 'ancient castles' of the aboriginal leader 'Śambara'.[1] The forts and castles thus destroyed by the Āryans belonged to the original Indians, perhaps Niṣādas, Śabaras, Dāsas and Dasyus or Asuras.

HARAPPAN LEGACY

About the religious legacy of the pre-Āryan Indians, Wheeler observes that 'the later Hinduism, in spite of its Āryan garb, did in fact retain not a little of the non-Āryan, Harappan mentality and relationships, perhaps to a far greater extent than can now be proved. The recurrent figures of proto-Śiva, seated in sinister state or possibly dancing as triumphant Naṭarāja, the evidence of phallic worship, of reverence paid to animals, particularly of the cult of the bull, have nothing to do with Vedic faith but anticipate dominant elements of the historic Brahmanism. It may be that the continuity which now seems to have characterized the Saurashtrian extension of the civilization and its succession contains the explanation. Otherwise we are left with the paradox that the Indus civilization transmitted to its successors a metaphysics that endured, whilst it failed utterly to transmit, at any rate from its primary homeland, the physical civilization which is its present monument.'[2]

John Marshall had demonstrated in detail the non-Āryan Harappan origins of the practice of *yoga* (asceticism and meditation) as well as of the worship of Śiva and Śakti.[3] Gordon Childe, after analysing the salient elements of pre-Āryan Indus religions, says that these religious concepts 'are familiar to modern and post-Vedic Hinduism. But they are conspicuously absent from the oldest of the Hindu sacred books, the *Ṛgveda*, while scenes illustrative of its hymns may be sought in vain in the Indus period.' He concludes that 'for the above reasons alone the Indus civilization may be regarded as non-Āryan and pre-Āryan.' This civilization 'was destroyed by barbarian invaders and the cities occupied by illiterate aliens.'[4] These 'illiterate aliens' were no other than the early Indo-Āryans who began to be civilized and literate when they settled on the plains of the Punjab and came in close contact with the autochthonous peoples.

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[1] Mortimer Wheeler, op. cit., pp. 131-32.

[2] ibid, pp. 136-37.

[3] John Marshall and others, *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, London, 1931, I, pp. 44ff.

[4] V. Gordon Childe, op. cit., pp. 185, 187.

The form and level of culture which is reflected in the Ṛgvedic hymns 'is of barbarian tribes, glorifying in their swift horses and light chariots, with sheep, goats and cattle, cultivating at first barley and wheat and later rice.'[1] They spoke what is called the 'Vedic' dialect; their earliest poetry, the hymns of the *Ṛgveda* may have been composed in *circa* 1200 BC. The Vedic dialect developed as Sanskrit after the time of Pāṇinī (*circa* 400 BC). Sanskrit thus began to develop nearly two centuries after the age of Śākyamuni, and it was the language of the priestly brāhmaṇas, sometimes called 'gods on the earth' (*bhūdevas*). The religion of the Vedic Āryans before the composition of the older Upaniṣads, centred round the cult of sacrifice to numerous gods who were little more than personifications of the natural phenomena like fire, water, air and light. The coming of the Āryans was, in some sense, a tragic event. For the great Indus 'civilization thus suffered a temporary eclipse at the hands of these barbarian nomads.'[2] But the Aryans soon began to adopt the ways and cultural patterns of the conquered Indians. An analysis of the data of later Vedic texts shows considerable non-Āryan influences in pre-Buddhistic Brahmanism. 'more accurately 'Vedism' or *Vaidika*, from *veda*, the proper Indian term, less accurately 'Hinduism,' a foreign word which means little more than Indianism.'[3]

It is legitimate to suppose that considerable racial and social intermixture must have taken place between the Āryans and the non-Āryans between, say, 1200 BC and 600 BC, the period of old Brahmanism. F. E. Pargiter had, long ago, suggested that 'Brahmanism' was originally a non-Āryan institution; by Brahmanism he means the institution of hereditary priesthood. According to him 'the earliest brāhmans were connected with the non-Āryan peoples.'[4] We are not in a position either to support or to refute this suggestion. There can be no doubt, however, regarding the non-Āryan elements in the myths and legends concerning many priestly families of Vedic tradition. This seems to be true of the earliest form of the institution of brāhmaṇas, their beliefs and ideas. Pargiter says that

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[1] Bridget and Raymond Allchin, op. cit., p. 153.
[2] A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 19.
[3] ibid, p. 22.
[4] F.E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, Delhi, 1962, p. 306.

'it is futile to expect to learn the truth about these matters from the priestly literature, because that was composed after the brāhmans had put forward their pretensions about themselves and the Veda.'[1]

१- अभिमान, महत्वाकांक्षा
दावा,
छल-कपट।
२- साहसिक यात्रा;

The above excursion into the prehistory of Indian culture was necessitated by the fantastic opinions expressed by Swami Vivekananda about the origin and antiquity of the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta. Our conclusions regarding this matter may be summed up now: the oldest parts of Vedic 'revelation' are not older than *circa* 1200 BC; the Vedic literature, including the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, Upaniṣads and Kalpasūtras, was developed between 1200 BC and 300 BC.

The old Upaniṣads differ from the other Vedic texts on fundamental doctrinal points. They contain some ideas quite foreign to old Vedic tradition but in agreement with known non-Vedic traditions of thought and culture. It is to the great authority of these sources of the Vedānta, the old Upaniṣads, that Vivekananda traces the doctrines associated with the Buddha and Buddhism.

He who knows something of the non-Āryan Indus culture and he who knows the basic differences between old Vedic religion and the thought of the old Upaniṣads, cannot treat the Upaniṣads or their Vedānta as the source of all great and profound religious doctrines of ancient India.

The great task of the scientific historian is to trace the ultimate origin of the fundamental ideas of Indian religious history. These fundamental ideas are the ideas of *yoga*, *dhyāna*, *karma*, *saṃsāra*, and *nirvāṇa* or *mokṣa*. I do not think that the greatness of the old Upaniṣads consists in their doctrine of the Brahman or the Self (*ātman*). The greatness of these texts lies in this that they contain some of these great ideas. Our study and research lead us to state that these ideas are of non-Āryan and pre-Vedic origin. Their sudden appearance in the Upaniṣads suggests that the royal and priestly seers of the Vedic tradition had borrowed them from the *munis* and *śramaṇas* or ascetic sages of non-Vedic cultural tradition.

The existence of *munis* and *śramaṇas* or ascetic sages of non-Vedic cultural tradition in pre-Āryan and non-Āryan Harappan culture is proved by the sculptures of men in the posture of *yoga* and *dhyāna*. Their continuity in Vedic age is attested by the *Keśī-sūkta* of the *Ṛgveda* which describes a *muni*.[2] Other early Vedic texts also contain occasional references to *munis* living outside the fold of Vedic Āryan society.[1] Among the prehistoric *munis* who possibly flourished during the Vedic age we may perhaps mention Kapilamuni, Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana-Vyāsa, and Pārśvanātha. Kapilamuni, the great non-Vedic and non-Āryan ascetic sage of *circa* ninth century BC, was either the founder or one of the main teachers of Sāṃkhya-Yoga. Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana or Vedavyāsa, was, in pedigree and culture, a product of the fusion of non-Āryan and Āryan elements. He was one of the main founders of the classical Brahmanical *dharmadarśana*, religion and philosophy. Pārśvanātha was a predecessor of Mahāvīra in the Jaina tradition.

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[1] F.E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 303.

[2] *Ṛgveda*, X. 136.

We must note here that the Jainas cherish the legends of twenty-three 'past' Jinas who appeared before Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth, and the Buddhists also have preserved the tradition of twenty-four 'past' Buddhas who flourished before Śākyamuni. It is impossible to establish the historical existence of all these 'former' or 'prehistoric' Jinas and Buddhas; the importance of these traditions lies in this that they claim for Jainism and Buddhism a pre-Jinist and pre-Buddhist origin and antiquity. The teachings of Mahāvīra and the Buddha, the two most historical teachers of *Śramaṇa* thought, were connected with pre-Upaniṣadic and non-Vedic religious tradition which has been traced to Harappan or Indus culture. The religious tradition of non-Āryan and non-Vedic *munis* continued to linger on during the supremacy of the Āryans of the Vedic epoch.

Pessimistic outlook towards this worldly life, the doctrine of *saṃsāra* or rebirth, the idea of *karma* as a law of moral retribution, the notion of release from transmigration as the ultimate transcendent quest, the practice of asceticism and meditation, emphasis on moral doctrines of *ahiṃsā* and *karuṇā* or inoffensiveness and compassion, and the idea of the ultimate unity of life in all its forms, all these profound and basic elements of Indian religious tradition seem to have been the contributions of the *munis* and *śramaṇas*. The historical systems of Jainism, Buddhism, Yoga, Sāṃkhya, and some ideas of the Upaniṣadic Vedānta were indebted to these *munis* and *śramaṇas*.[2]

4· चुकती प्रतिकार

2· पुनर्जन्म. 3· वैराग्य
5· अति श्रेष्ठ

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[1] See G.C. Pande, op. cit., pp. 258ff.

[2] See my *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, pp. xviii, 415-16, 418; *Buddhism*, pp. 1-3; *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism;* 'Genesis of Buddhism Restated' in *World Buddhism*: *Vesak Annual*—2516-1972, pp. 70-72; *An*

In our discussion of the historical approach to the study of religion in the preceding chapter, we have emphasized that we must study the Buddhist tradition from the Buddhist standpoint. We are rather obliged to respect the Buddhist myths and legends concerning the origin of Buddhist ideas and practices.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE BUDDHIST IDEAS

Both Radhakrishnan and Kane have quoted a passage from a Pali canonical text and misused it to support their own hypothesis that the Buddha restated only the Indo-Āryan ideals. That passage[1] occurs in the Pali *Saṃyuttanikāya* (*Nidānavagga*, *Nidānasaṃyutta*, *Nagarasutta*).[2] In that passage the Buddha claims to 'have seen an old path, an old road, traversed by the Supremely Enlightened Ones of former times.' Who were these Supremely Enlightened Ones of former times (*pubbakehi sammāsambuddhehi*), whose ancient path (*purāṇa-magga*), the historic Buddha had traversed? Swami Vivekananda, and following him, Radhakrishnan and Kane, would say that they were Vedic-Brahmanic-Upaniṣadic 'seers' (*ṛṣis*). But the ancient Buddhists, the compilers of the Pali Canon, say that these 'former Buddhas' were those *munis* and *śramaṇas* who are believed to have realized the Buddhahood before Śākyamuni.

The Buddhist tradition does not recognize the Vedic or Vedantic authority; the Buddhists do not recognise Yājñavalkya, Janaka, Jaivalī, Śvetaketu, Naciketas, Yama, Aśvapati-Kaikeya, Uddālaka-Āruṇī as *enlightened* or *buddhas*. These priestly and royal 'seers', whose dialogues are recorded in the old Upaniṣads, are according to the Buddhist teaching, followers of a 'false philosophy' (*mithyādṛṣṭi*). Of course, they are not well known to old Buddhist sources. It will be a blasphemy or heresy for the Buddhists to say that the teachers of a doctrine of eternal Self (*ātman*) were supremely enlightened in the Buddhist sense.

On the other hand, some Buddhist texts mention a list of six Buddhas, Vipaśyī, Śikhī, Viśvabhū, Krakuchanda, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa, as predecessors of Śākyamuni. Other Buddhist texts have a

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Introduction to Indian Religions, pp. 7-8, 48-49, 77-79, 110-11; *Aspects of Buddhism in Indian History*, pp. 15-25.

[1] See pp. 34-35 above.

[2] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, Nalanda Devanāgarī edn., II, 1959, pp. 90-91; Pali Text Society's Roman edn., II, pp. 106-07; English trans. by Mrs. Rhys Davids and F.L. Woodward, *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, London, 1952, part II, pp. 74-75.

2· कटुवचन,
या नास्तिकता·

longer list of twenty-four Buddhas, who are all believed to have been the predecessors of Gautama Buddha. The myths and legends of these former Buddhas are important for Buddhology, for the *Buddhas of faith*. Although an inscription of the third century BC celebrates a *stūpa* of Kanakamuni Buddha,[1] and although a few of the immediate predecessors of Śākyamuni seem to have been historical teachers of *śramaṇa* thought, it is very difficult, at the present state of our knowledge, to write a satisfactory account of the 'former Buddhas' of the Buddhist tradition.[2] One thing is certain, however. And this is that Śākyamuni continued the ancient religious tradition of non-Āryan and non-Vedic *munis* and *śramaṇas*.

There is no evidence whatsoever for the belief that 'the Buddha was born a Hindu.' This statement is rooted in gross ignorance of ancient Indian history and culture. There is no early and reliable evidence even to suggest that the Śākyas of Kapilavastu, the Mallas of Kuśīnagara, or the Licchavīs of Vaiśālī were followers of Vedic Brahmanic religion. The area where the Buddha appeared and taught was not a fully aryanised or brahmanised part of India in the sixth century BC. Vedic-Āryan culture was making only a slow progress in Magadha at the time of the Buddha. All accounts tell us that it was the *Śramaṇa* thought, the non-Vedic philosophies of wandering ascetics and rational and empirical sophists, which held away over Kośala and Magadha during the age of Śākyamuni and Mahāvīra. The brāhmaṇa teachers of Vedic rituals and theology, wherever they were found in Magadha, had to argue with and defend their position against the rising tide of *Śramaṇa* thought.

3 तपस्वी

4 युक्तिसंग

5. अनुभवमूलक.

Since the Buddha was not born as a Vaidika or a follower of Vedic Brahmanism, the question of reforming it and protesting against its 'corruptions' does not arise. He was born in and belonged to the Śramanic culture which was older than the Vedic Brahmanic culture. The use of the word 'heresy' for the teachings of the Mahāśramaṇa Gautama is absurd and meaningless. Phrases and analogies taken from European and Christian history do not suit the dynamics of ancient Indian and Buddhist history. Jesus was a Jew; he came to fulfil the religion of the Old Testament; he came not to destroy. This is in accordance with the best Christian tradition. But the Buddha was not a Vaidika, nor an Aupaniṣadika; the Buddha clearly says that He had no teacher, no one to be compared with Him; to say that He was a Vaidika reformer is against the best tradition of Buddhism; the Buddha was Self-Born, *svayaṃbhū;* that is to say, the Buddhahood or Nirvāṇa which He realized, was His own discovery; His originality lay in the great path He discovered to it.

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[1] See A.S. Geden's article on 'Kanakamuni' in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, VII, p. 644.

True it is, that some of the moral qualities which the Buddha emphasized belonged to Śramanic antiquity. If the Buddha 'borrowed' anything from any source, it was from the non-Vedic ascetic sages, *munis* and *śramaṇas*. His aim was not to reform Vedic religion, and this has to be emphasized, because reformation implies 'protest' and 'heresy'. It must be admitted, however, that reformation of the Vedic religion and priestly practices did take place after the age of the Buddha as a consequence of the spread of Buddhism. The Buddha had criticised Old Vedic beliefs and practices. The development of anti-ritualistic and anti-sacrificial tendency within the Brahmanic tradition was due to the powerful impact of *śramaṇa* thought.

The view of Vivekananda that Buddhism had its origin in the conflict between the priests or brāhmaṇas and kings or kṣatriyas is not sound. He forgets that Siddhārtha Gautama had renounced royal throne and kingdom in order to become a *śramaṇa*, an ascetic. He was not one of those worldly kings who stuck to their kingship and discussed philosophy with acquisitive brāhmaṇas in times of leisure. The ideal of renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) which the Swami praised endlessly and which he himself sought to practice, was not practised by the royal and priestly philosophers of the Upaniṣads. It was the Buddhist and the Jaina *śramaṇas* and *munis*, who propagated and practised renunciation. In the course of time, as a result of their influence, the brāhmaṇas also began to acknowledge *saṃnyāsa* as a stage in an Āryan's life.

It must be stated here that I am not the first to put forward the theory of the non-Āryan and pre-Vedic origin of ascetic thought. In 1957 G. C. Pande had drawn pointed attention of scholars to the non-Vedic character of *munis* and *śramaṇas* in the Vedic age. He had also suggested that the Upaniṣads had been influenced by non-Āryan and pre-Vedic ascetic ideas. But he firmly believed, nevertheless, that '*although direct evidence is lacking*, it appears that early Buddhism was fundamentally influenced by the Upaniṣads which gave to it its early tendencies towards Idealism and Absolutism' (italics added).[1] In the absence of 'direct evidence,' we cannot accept this hypothesis which is based on an uncritical acceptance of chronological priority of the old Upaniṣads.[1]

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[1] G.C. Pande, op. cit., p. 556.

The other eminent scholar who had perceived non-Āryan impact on Brahmanical philosophy and culture was Heinrich Zimmer. Referring to the ideas of two systems of *śramaṇa* thought, Sāṃkhya and Yoga, he had made, perhaps as early as 1942, the following remarkable observation:

'These ideas do not belong to the original stock of the Vedic Brahmanic tradition. Nor, on the other hand, do we find among the basic teachings of Sāṅkhya and Yoga any hint of such a pantheon of divine Olympians, beyond the vicissitudes of earthly bondage, as that of the Vedic gods. The two ideologies are of different origin, Sāṅkhya and Yoga being related to the mechanical system of the Jainas, which can be traced, in a partly historical, partly legendary way, through the long series of the Tīrthaṅkaras, to a remote, aboriginal, non-Vedic, Indian antiquity. The fundamental ideas of Sāṅkhya and Yoga, therefore, must be immensely old. And yet they do not appear in any of the orthodox Indian texts until comparatively late—specifically, in the younger stratifications of the Upaniṣads and in the *Bhagavadgītā*, where they are already blended and harmonized with the fundamental ideas of the Vedic philosophy. Following a long history of rigid resistance, the exclusive and esoteric brāhman mind of the Āryan invaders opened up, at last, and received suggestions and influences from the native civilization. The result was the coalescence of the two traditions. And this is what produced, in time, the majestic harmonizing systems of medieval and contemporary Indian thought.'[2]

1 सर्व देवता
2 विशिष्ट-महत्वक
3 उलट-फे
4 मिश्रित
5 रहस्यमय गुप्त.
6 एकत्व

This opinion agrees with our view that the Upaniṣadic Vedānta is the result of this 'coalescence of the two traditions': the non-Āryan or Śramanic and the Āryan or Brahmanic. This brings us to a consideration of the date of composition of old Upaniṣads.

THE DATE OF THE OLD UPANISADS

There are more than 108 Upaniṣads; most of them are of medieval origin. Among the ancient Upaniṣads the oldest are the following eleven: *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Śvetāśvatara*, *Praśna*, *Kauṣītakī*, and *Īśā*. Even among these eleven, the first two are older than the rest. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣads* may be placed in *circa* 500 BC. The remaining nine texts may be placed between 400-200 BC. It is clear that in suggesting these dates I am setting forth a rather unconventional proposition. A.B. Keith had declared, in 1925, that 'it is wholly impossible to make out any case for dating the oldest even of the extant Upanishads beyond the sixth century BC, and the acceptance of an earlier date must rest merely on individual fancy.'[1] O.H. de A. Wijesekera, on the other hand, says that 'the older *suttas* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* were composed before the end of the Brāhmaṇa period when the Upaniṣads had not come to be regarded as independent texts.'[2]

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[1] See my analysis of the date of the old Upaniṣads in *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, pp. 21-31.

[2] Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, ed. by Joseph Campbell, New York, 1956, p. 281.

Recently, Pratap Chandra has raised the question: 'Was early Buddhism influenced by the Upaniṣads?'[3] His article is insightful and clear-worded. After citing the Brahmanical views of some high authorities, he observes that 'it has been uncritically assumed that in ancient India all philosophy and religious ideas flowed from the Upaniṣads, and attempts then were made to fit early Buddhism into this picture. Naturally, there was no alternative but to establish somehow that early Buddhism was indebted to the Upaniṣads.'[4] He notes that the Pali Canon does not refer to 'Brahman' in the neuter as distinguished from Brahmā in the masculine, that the brāhmaṇas figure in the Pali texts only as priests and not as philosophers, that they do not talk 'in the Upaniṣadic vein' and that 'the seers and sage-philosophers of the Upaniṣads' do not find mention in the Pali Canon. He then asks the following question: 'when the Brāhmaṇas, as a class, did not have the important place in the social set up in which the Buddha moved that they acquired in the succeeding centuries, why should it be presumed that their philosophy had a precedence over all other systems?'[4] Unfortunately, this writer is not acquainted with the background and history of the *śramaṇa* thought, and like many

[1] A.B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads*, Cambridge, 1925, pp. 498-02.

[2] O.H. de A. Wijesekera, 'A Pali Reference to Brāhmaṇacaraṇas' in *The Adyar Library Bulletin*, XX, 1956, pp. 254f.

[3] Pratap Chandra, 'Was early Buddhism Influenced by the Upaniṣads?' in *Philosophy East & West*, XXI, 1971, p. 319.

[4] ibid, p. 322.

others before him, he also stops with the Upaniṣads; for he says that 'Undoubtedly, the Upaniṣads were pre-Buddhistic.' His conclusion is as follows: 'The fact that the Pali Canon appears to be ignorant of the philosophy of the Brāhmaṇas but not of their ritualistic practices is very suggestive. Probably both the Upaniṣads and early Buddhism developed independently of each other as reactions to the same type of situation.'[1] Thus he reaches the same old and familiar conclusion: Buddhism originated as a 'reaction' to Brahmanic ritualism. Every 'Hindu' must ensure the supposed antiquity and originality of the venerable Upaniṣads.

Before we conclude, we must sum up our arguments for placing the Upaniṣads between 500 BC and 200 BC.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*[2] mentions king Ajātaśatru 'of Kāśī.' This king is mentioned also in the *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad*[3] This Ajātaśatru is, in all likelihood, identical with king Ajātaśatru of Magadha, son of king Bimbisāra, and a younger contemporary of Śākyamuni. He is also called 'son of Vaidehī'. His mother was a princess of Videha and his step-mother was the daughter of the king of Kāśī, hence his epithet Kāśva, 'of Kāśī'. His interest in religion and philosophy is attested not only by the Upaniṣads but also by the Pali texts of the Buddhists and the Prakrit canonical texts of the Jainas. Ajātaśatru ruled in the early fifth century BC.

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[4] refers to the tenet of *ahiṃsā*, 'inoffensiveness' and states that it should be observed 'except at holy places' (*anyatra tīrthebhyaḥ*). The *tīrthas* or 'holy places' in Vedic age were the places of sacrifice where animals were offered in the ritual. The doctrine of *ahiṃsā* does not seem to be older than the Buddha and Mahāvīra.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*[5] also mentions the idea of *karma* which survives death and affects rebirth. This is again a Buddhist and Jinist or *śramaṇa* concept. R.E. Hume viewed this reference to *karma* as an evidence of the Buddhist impact upon the Upaniṣads. He also pointed out a number of linguistic features common to the Pali Nikāyas and the Upaniṣads.[6]

Ajātaśatru, a contemporary of the Buddha and Mahāvīra, is not the only historical person mentioned in the Upaniṣads. In the *Śāṃkhāyana* or *Kauṣītakī Āraṇyaka* is mentioned Guṇākhya Śāṃkhāyana as a pupil of Kahola Kauṣītakī. This Guṇākhya Śāṃkhāyana seems to have been a fellow student of Āśvalāyana of Kośala, for Āśvalāyana honours Kahola as his teacher.[1] This Āśvalāyana Kauśalya mentioned in the *Praśna Upaniṣad* is identical with Assalāyana of Sāvatthī (Śrāvastī) who is mentioned as a contemporary of the Buddha in the *Assalāyanasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. This identification we owe to Raychaudhuri. Furthermore, a contemporary of Assalāyana was the brāhmaṇa sage Kabandhi Kātyāyana who may be the same as Kakudha (Prakudha) Kaccāyana mentioned in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* as a noted teacher and philosopher and a contemporary of Śākyamuni. Two brāhmaṇa sages of later Vedic age mentioned in the *Śāṃkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, are also mentioned as contemporaries of the Buddha in two *suttas* of the *Dīghanikāya*.[2] Their names are Pauṣkarasādi (Pukkusāti) and Lauhitya (Lohicca). These historical references prove that some of the Āraṇyakas and Gṛhyasūtras are to be assigned to fifth century BC.

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[1] Pratap Chandra, op. cit., p. 324. [2] II. 1.1. [3] IV. 1. [4] III. 17.4.
[5] III. 2. 12-13. [6] R.E. Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, pp. 6-7.

Pāṇinī (*circa* 400 BC) does not know the Āraṇyakas, but Kātyāyana (*circa* 300 BC) knows the word Āraṇyaka, both as a 'forest treatise' and as a 'forest dweller.' The famous Yājñavalkya was a contemporary of Kahola Kauṣītakī mentioned earlier. It is not insignificant that Pāṇinī does not recognise Yājñavalkya's works as belonging to ancient (*purāṇaprokta*) brāhmaṇas, and that the *Āpastamba-dharmasūtra* considers Śvetaketu as a modern or recent (*avara*) scholar. This Śvetaketu is a famous figure in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*[3] and the *Chāndogya*[4]. He was a contemporary of Guṇākhya Śāṃkhāyana and therefore of Assalāyana of Sāvatthi. These historical figures of the Upaniṣadic fame, thus, seem to have lived in the sixth and fifth centuries BC.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* means 'the Upaniṣad of the shaven-headed monks'; it is obviously a post-Buddhist text deeply influenced by the outlook of *munis* and *bhikṣus*. The Vedic brāhmaṇas in the age of the Buddha used to address Him as a *Samaṇaka* and *Muṇḍaka*. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*[5] criticises the early Buddhist doctrine of the plurality of elements and refers to the upholders of *the existence of*

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[1] *Śāṁkhāyana* (*Kauṣītakī*) *Āraṇyaka*, ch. 15; *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, II. 4.4; see also H.C. Raychaudhuri, op. cit., p. 33.

[2] *Dīghanikāya*, I, *Ambaṭṭhasutta* and *Lohiccasutta*. For Vedic references to them see A.B. Keith and A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 27 and 235.

[3] VI. 2. 1, *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, IV. 3. 105; *Āpastamba-dharmasūtra*, I. 2.5. 4-6.

[4] VI. 1.

[5] IV. 14.

separate dharmas (*pṛthag dharmān*). All these points suggest that the old Upaniṣads belong to a period between that of Buddha and Aśoka.

CONCLUSION

Whereas Swami Vivekananda believed that the Upaniṣads were older than Buddhism by 2000 years, our conclusion is that the two oldest Upaniṣads are nearly contemporary with and at least 9 out of 11 of the old ones are later than the Buddha. Whereas he believed that Buddhism had borrowed all the great doctrines from the Upaniṣads, our suggestion is that the authors of these texts had taken over their great doctrines from non-Vedic *munis* and *śramaṇas*, and that almost all the great sages and philosophers of the oldest Upaniṣads were contemporaries of the Buddha and Mahāvīra.

Gautama Buddha was neither a teacher of Vedic Brahmanic religion nor its reformer. He was a Muni, a Śramaṇa and a Ṛṣi, 'Seer', in His own religious tradition which was connected with pre-Vedic and non-Āryan stream of ideas. Jainism, Buddhism, the Sāṃkhya and the Yoga had their ultimate origin in the non-Vedic tradition of the Munis and Śramaṇas. The non-dualistic Vedāntic thought and the yogic and mystic elements of the Upaniṣads are also to be traced to the influence of the ideas of *munis* and *śramaṇas*. The Upaniṣads thus are composite texts of hybrid origin. They could well be regarded as documents of *śramaṇa* thought minus their sacrificial symbolism and formal allegiance to old Vedic tradition. The legacy of the *śramaṇa* culture became the heart of Upaniṣadic Vedānta just as the Mahāśramaṇa Śākyamuni became the greatest Master of the refined and reformed Hinduism. To this aspect of the Buddha's role in Indian civilization we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER III

The Buddha and His Teachings

-निंदा, समालोचना,

THE BUDDHA AND HIS HISTORICITY

ध्यान
से
चार,

After the preceding animadversions we now come to a pleasant and inspiring theme of the greatness and glory of the Enlightened One. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan observes: 'Among the inspiring treasures of the human spirit is the memory of Gautama the Buddha. Its hold over the imagination of millions of our fellow beings is immense; its inspiration to braver and nobler living for centuries is incalculable; its contribution to the refining of the spirit of man and the humanizing of his social relations is impressive'.[1]

In modern times, Swami Vivekananda was perhaps the first great Indian who reminded his countrymen as well as the Europeans and the Americans of the greatness of the Buddha. The Buddhists all the world over will remain grateful to this great modern Hindu monk and leader for his contribution to spreading the knowledge about the Buddha and His teachings, especially in India where His very name had been nearly forgotten for many centuries.

As an expression of our gratitude to the great Swami, we may quote below the first two verses in praise of the Buddha composed by the Buddhist poet Mātṛceta in the first century of the Christian era:

'In Whom at all times and in all ways all faults are absent and in Whom all virtues in every manner are established, in Him it is proper for them that have understanding to take refuge, *to praise Him*, to serve Him, and to stand fast in His teaching.'[2]

Swami Vivekananda spoke of the greatness of the Buddha so enthusiastically and eloquently as to make his American audience feel that he was himself a 'Buddhist monk' and 'a learned Buddhist preacher.' This is the mark of a truly religious man, of a real scholar of the faith of other men, that when he speaks of the prophets and founders of religions other than his own, he rises above the prejudices and presuppositions of his own religion.

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[1] S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 330.

[2] *The Śatapañcāśatka of Mātṛceta*, ed. by D.R. Shackleton-Bailey with an introduction, Eng. trans. and notes, Cambridge, 1951, p. 152.

In so far as his love, admiration and reverence for the Buddha are concerned, Vivekananda is unequalled among non-Buddhists. No other Hindu has praised the Buddha so consistently and wholeheartedly as he has done. We can say, without any fear of contradiction, that not even the most earnest and devout among the modern Buddhists have displayed so much zeal and generosity in honouring the Tathāgata with beautiful flowers of moving speech as is found in the lectures, epistles and books of this Swami.

In this chapter we will study the Hindus' attitudes towards the Buddha and His teachings. The attitude of Hindus towards the Buddha differs from that towards Buddhism. This difference is important and appears somewhat paradoxical. The Buddha is praised in the superlative, while Buddhism receives scant regard; the Teacher is revered and admired, while Buddhism is looked askance at and rejected. In accordance with this twofold attitude, we will first restate Vivekananda's views about the Great Master and afterwards review his comments on Buddhism.

2. विरोध
भासक
3 - लोक
विरुद्
3 परोक्ष
रूप मे
कनखिय
से.

The Great Man, the Man among men, the Buddha, was born in India six centuries before Christ. He is 'one of the most historical prophets of the world.' The Buddha and Mohammad are the two most historical persons, and the Buddha is the most ancient historical teacher. Kṛṣṇa is 'very mythological' (III. 524). 4. पौराणिक, काल्पनि

HIS UNRIVALLED COMPASSION

5. मूर्तिमत्ता.

The Buddha was an embodiment of supreme compassion (*mahākaruṇā*). His sympathy was unequalled. Here lay His greatness. The Vedas or the Upaniṣads lacked that intellect and that heart which characterized His personality. These virtues 'have never since been paralleled throughout the history of the world' (VI. 225-226). He taught us how to sympathise with the miserable, the sinner and the poor. A most stern man, He was the most unselfish man; He taught a religion in which there was no selfish motive. He spoke in the language of the people, leaving the language of the gods, in order to reach the hearts of the people. Gautama renounced a royal throne to live among the beggars, the poor, and the downcast. The Buddha taught the good of all; we must help all; a man has to be pure and holy and unselfish, he must find his life in others. The Indians need 'the wonderful sympathy' of the Buddha (V. 15). The greatest benefactor of humanity, He was ready to sacrifice His life for anyone and every one. All His life He ceaselessly worked for the good of all. He sought the ultimate good of all in thought, word and deed.

We learn from contemporary press reporters of the United States of America that Swami Vivekananda spoke 'without notes'; one reporter calls him 'an orator by divine right.' In the course of his lectures, which were usually very long, Vivekananda often quoted from some Buddhist texts. His quotations are not always precise or *verbatim*, and he does not always refer to the name of the text he quotes. Nor the compilers of his *Complete Works* have cared to supply the names of the quoted texts. But he who is acquainted with the Buddhist scriptures can locate the Swami's paraphrases of scriptural sayings.

Let us consider one example. He says: 'You remember that passage in the sermon of Buddha, how He sent a thought of love towards the south, the north, the east and the west, above and below, until the whole universe was filled with this love, so grand, great, and infinite. When you have that feeling, you have true personality' (II. 324). This statement corresponds to a verse in the *Mettasutta*, 'Discourse on Loving Kindness,' of the Pali *Suttanipāta*, which I quote below: 'Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so let a man cultivate boundless heart towards all beings. Let his thoughts of infinite love pervade the whole universe: above, below and across, without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.'[1] The same teaching of the Buddha is expressed in beautiful and memorable words by Paul Carus thus:

'Do not deceive, do not despise
Each other, anywhere.
Do not be angry, nor should ye
Secret resentment bear:
For as a mother risks her life
And watches over her child,
So boundless be your love to all,
So tender, kind and mild.

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[1] *Suttanipāta*, ed. in the *Khuddakanikāya*, I, Nalanda, 1959; *Mettasutta*, p. 291. A good Eng. trans. in E.M. Hare's *Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists*, p. 24.

Yea, cherish good-will right and left,
All round, early and late,
And without hindrance, without stint,
From envy free and hate,
While standing, walking, sitting down,
Whate'er you have in mind,
The rule of life that's always best
Is to be loving-kind.'[1]

Vivekananda may be said to have beaten the drum of the Buddhist tenet of unselfishness in this world overwhelmed by egoism and self-centredness. 'The Buddha seems to have been the only prophet who did everything for others and absolutely nothing for himself. He gave up his home and all the enjoyments of life to spend his days in search of the medicine for the terrible disease of human misery' (II. 495). The way to ultimate peace and bliss which the Buddha had discovered constitutes the Buddhist medicine against all the ills of existence. An ancient *Mahāyānasūtra* describes the Buddha as 'the King of Physicians' (*vaidyarāja*) and as 'the Dispenser of immortal medicine' (*amṛta-bheṣaja-pradaḥ*).[2] Candrakīrti, the philosopher (7th century AD), calls Him 'the Great King of Doctors, the Physician of the great disease of passions' (*kleśa-mahāvyādhi-cikitsaka-mahāvaidya-rāja*).[3]

THE TORCHBEARER OF MANKIND

The Buddha is revered as 'the Torchbearer of Mankind' in the *Suttanipāta*.[4] He attained Illumination (*bodhi*) and diffused it all over the world; that Spiritual Torch emitted a Light that dispelled the darkness not only of men but also of gods. The Buddhists revere Him as the 'Teacher of gods and men.' The word Buddha symbolises light, awakening, enlightenment, knowledge and wisdom. It also symbolises moral perfection and spiritual fulfilment. The Buddha is thus the source of wisdom and morality and of all those good qualities of head and heart that civilized humanity cherishes and cultivates. Swami Vivekananda repeatedly stresses these qualities of the Buddha's character.

The Buddha renounced his royal throne and position; 'that was true renunciation.' What can a beggar renounce who has nothing to

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[1] Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, Chicago, 1915, p. 67.
[2] *Lalitavistara*, *BST*, p. 1.
[3] *Prasannapadā*, *BST*, p. 152.
[4] Verse 336.

१-त्याग

renounce? Having renounced kingship, He taught self-sacrifice. He set the supreme example of renunciation and self-abnegation. The celebrated Hindu holy book, the *Bhagavadgītā*, teaches, among other things, what Gandhi called 'the gospel of selfless action' (*niṣkāma-karmayoga*). Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi have emphasized this aspect of the *Gītā's* teaching. The Buddha is honoured as the one who practised this teaching to the highest degree.

'All the prophets of the world, except Buddha, had external motives to move them to unselfish action . . . He was, in the conduct of his life, absolutely without personal motives; and what man worked more than he? Show me in history one character who has soared so high above all. The whole human race has produced but one such character, such high philosophy, such wide sympathy. This great philosopher, preaching the highest philosophy, yet had the deepest sympathy for the lowest of animals, and never put forth any claims for himself. He is the ideal Karma Yogi, acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been the greatest man ever born; beyond compare the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul-power that has ever been manifested . . . This man represents the very highest ideal of Karma Yoga.'[1]

From the Buddhist standpoint the practice of perfect virtues (*pāramitās*) is the supreme form of religious life. The Bodhisattva, the being whose will or intention is fixed on Bodhi or Buddhahood, works for the good and happiness of all the living beings, with a view to liberating them from bondage. He expects no rewards; he finds his true self in other beings; his good consists in the good of all the other beings. Equivalence of the self and the neighbour (*parātmasamatā*) is his attribute. The Bodhisattva asks the challenging question: 'When to myself, as to my fellow beings, fear and pain are unpleasant, what distinguishes my own self that I protect it and not others?'[2] It was after perfecting the career of a Bodhisattva that Siddhārtha Gautama became a Buddha. All His actions proceeded from universal loving kindness towards all beings. This loving kindness (*maitrī*) or compassion (*karuṇā*) is inseparable from the nature of the Buddha. The Hindus are justified in interpreting the conduct of the Buddha in terms of *karmayoga* which consists in the practice of unselfish altruism. परोपकार

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[1] *Complete Works*, I, pp. 117-18.
[2] *Śikṣāsamuccaya, BST*, verse 1.

The basis of the Buddha's *karmayoga* was His great compassion towards the suffering beings; wholly emancipated from the self-system, the Teacher of the doctrine of not-self (*anātmavāda*) could find no justification for any selfish or egoistical effort in thought, word and deed. This notion is the foundation of the idea of equality of all human beings, of the universal brotherhood of mankind. All conflicts, tensions, hatreds, quarrels, unequality, injustice, and all forms of offence and violence are traceable to the belief in the reality of 'one's own existence' (*sva-bhāva*) or 'one's own self' (*ātman*). By preaching the tenet of the unreality of this notion of 'I', 'me' and 'mine', the Buddha struck at the root of all evils and passions.

Although Vivekananda does not appreciate this doctrinal background of the Buddha's teaching of unselfishness, he has fully grasped the greatness of the Buddha as the Torchbearer of Mankind in this world of darkness. 'That Man set in motion the highest moral ideas any nation can have. Whenever there is a moral code, it is ray of light from that Man' (II.143; VII.41).

The Buddha recognized human freedom and equality of opportunity in social and religious life. Distinctions and discriminations based on race, colour, caste and sex did not find place in His teachings. His teachings were thus truly universal. It was Vivekananda's merit that he was the first Hindu in modern times to perceive this fact and emphasize it repeatedly. 'Buddha was the first to teach universal brotherhood of man. It is a cardinal principle of the Buddhist faith today' (II.485; III.441; III.525). Selfishness, egoism, casteism and unequality are the curses of mankind. The Buddha was the first to find out these curses. He was the first to make a diagnosis of these terrible diseases of humanity. His way of universal liberation was open to all human beings.

Opening the gates to the Deathless State (*amṛta-pada*) for all the beings living under the shadow of decay and death is the greatest good one can do. The Buddha is credited to have opened the doors to immortality (*apārutā tesaṃ amatassa dvārā*).[1] Vivekananda says that the Buddha was thus the supreme benefactor of humanity; He worked for the benefit of others and taught the supreme principle of selfless service to others. 'I therefore prostrate myself before the Lord Buddha' (VI.310-311).

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[1] *Mahāvagga*, Nalanda, 1956, p. 10.

Doing good to others involves the practice of great moral virtues like harmlessness (*ahiṃsā*), friendliness (*maitrī*), and kindness (*karuṇā*). The practice of these virtues demands supreme renunciation (*tyāga*) and non-attachment (*vairāgya*). Renunciation of attachment to pleasures, possessions, powers, and privileges is an extraordinary accomplishment. Śākyamuni's life is the perfect example of renunciation and non-attachment. 'Never was a great man of such renunciation born in this world as Buddha' (VI.507).

The Buddha established the *samgha*, a disciplined body of dedicated renouncers of worldliness. Their mission was not only to perfect their own religious course but also to propagate the holy path for the spiritual wellbeing and joy of all the people (*bahujana*). The Swami makes repeated references to the classic words: *bahujana hitāya bahujana sukhāya*; 'for the spiritual wellbeing of the many, for the spiritual happiness of the many' (II.352; III.424).

A few months after the Enlightenment, the Sage had found a group of sixty perfected saints (*arhats*) as disciples. To them He commanded as follows: 'Go ye forth, monks, and wander, for the spiritual wellbeing of the many, for the spiritual happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world of beings, for the good, for the wellbeing, and for the happiness of human and divine beings.'[1] Swami Vivekananda wanted this to be the ideal of the followers of the non-dual Vedānta. He firmly believed that 'until Buddha's heart comes once more into India', the people of India will remain in a hopeless state. 'I wish I had one infinitesimal part of Buddha's heart' (IV.136).

अतिसूक्ष्म

THE BUDDHA AMONG THE PROPHETS

Swami Vivekananda liked comparisons and metaphors. He was well read in the history of the world, including in the history of the religions of west Asian origin. He drew parallels frequently and expressed his opinions fearlessly. Comparisons in the study of religions are often odious, and comparisons among the prophets and founders of different faiths may lead to serious misunderstanding. We quote below some of his statements in order to highlight the Hindu attitude towards the Buddha.

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[1] *Mahāvagga*, p. 23; *Lalitavistara*, *BST*, p. 301.

२-घृणित

'Buddha seems to have been the only prophet who did everything for others and absolutely nothing for himself' (II.495). He was 'the greatest, the boldest preacher of morality, that the world ever saw' (III.262). 'He was the first being in the world who brought missionarising into practice—nay, he was the first to conceive the idea of proselytising' (I.22). 'Buddha was the first to teach universal brotherhood of man' (II.485). He was 'the sanest philosopher the world ever saw. Its best and its sanest teacher' (III.528). 'The greatest soul that ever wore a human form, the Bhagavān Buddha' (IV.326). 'As a character Buddha was the greatest the world has ever seen; next to him Christ. But the teachings of Krishna as taught in the Gita are the grandest the world has ever known' (VII.22). 'Christ and Buddha were the names of a state to be attained; Jesus and Gautama were the persons to manifest it. 'Mother' is the first and highest manifestation, next the Christs and the Buddhas' (VII. 29). 'Buddha was the only great Indian philosopher who would not recognise caste, and not one of his followers remains in India. All the other philosophers pandered more or less to social prejudices; no matter how high they soared, still a bit of the vulture remained in them. As my Master used to say, "The vulture soars high out of sight in the sky, but his eye is ever on a bit of carrion on the earth' (VII.39-40).

'Buddha was more brave and sincere than any teacher . . . Buddha was the first human being to give to the world a complete system of morality' (VII.40-41).

'Buddha was a great Vedantist, and Shankara is often called a hidden Buddhist. Buddha made the analysis, Shankara made the synthesis out of it. Buddha never bowed down to anything—neither Veda, nor caste, nor priest, nor custom. He fearlessly reasoned so far as reason could take him. Such a fearless search for truth and such love for every living thing the world has never seen' (VII.59).

'Buddha preached the most tremendous truths . . . one of his great messages was the equality of man. Men are all equal . . . Buddha was the great preacher of equality' (VIII.98).

'The life of Buddha has an especial appeal. All my life I have been very fond of Buddha, but not of his doctrine. I have more veneration for that character than for any other—that boldness, that fearlessness, and that tremendous love . . . How can we ignorant, selfish, narrow-minded human beings ever understand the greatness of this man?' (VIII.103-104).

'Of all the teachers of the world, he was the one who taught us most to be self-reliant, who freed us not only from the bondages of our false selves but from dependence on the invisible being or beings called God or gods. He invited everyone to enter into that state of freedom which he called Nirvana' (VIII.105).

'It is my particular fancy that the same Buddha became Christ. Buddha prophesied, "I will come again in five hundred years", and Christ came here in five hundred years. These are the two Lights of the whole human nature. Two men have been produced, Buddha and Christ; these are the two giants, huge gigantic personalities, two Gods. Between them they divide the whole world. Wherever there is the least knowledge in the world, people bow down either to Buddha or Christ' (VIII.180).

GLORIES OF THE BUDDHA

Many distinguished Indians seem to share this attitude of profound respect and gratitude towards the Buddha. The Buddhists' praise of the Buddha may perhaps he said to be inspired by their faith in Him and His teachings; but the fact that He has inspired eloquent eulogy even among those who are not formally Buddhists, indicates exceptional glories of the Great Master.

In order to show that Vivekananda was reverberating the Buddhist notion of profound devotion to the Buddha and reaffirming the Buddhist faith in the glories of 'the King of Victors' (*Jinendra*), we will cite a few verses from the Buddhist sources. And, in order to suggest that Vivekananda's attitude is common to a large number of great Indians, ancient and modern, we will quote some non-Buddhist sources.

Mātṛceta[1] expressed the incomparability of the Buddha in the following words:

'Envying not the distinguished, despising not the lowly, competing not with equals you attained pre-eminence in the world. Your devotion was to the causes of virtue, not to their results. Therefore, by means of your perfect way of conduct the virtues attained in you their culmination[२].

You raised yourself to such a height by good actions that even the dust of your feet became a receptacle of merit. What likeness indeed

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[1] *The Śatapañcāśatka*, verses 27-29, 34, 40-41 as trans. by Shackleton Bailey.

२. उच्चतम शिखर

could there be to your virtues, unrivalled, unapproachable, lasting, turning not aside, unsurpassed? Only to that jewel of the Law (Dharma), by the gain of which you gained pre-eminence, do you bear resemblance, O Kindly One, and only it resembles you.

But where something with a hint of similarity is, adduced by way of comparison with you, being merely the delusion of a man's own wish, that is great wantonness on the part of the speaker.' 1-भ्रांति, माया

It will be noticed that in the second verse (twenty-eighth in the text) quoted above, Mātṛceta, the devout Buddhist poet, supports Vivekananda's interpretation of the Buddha's actions in terms of the theory of the *niṣkāma karma-yoga*. In the *Bhagavadgītā*[1] Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna that he should concentrate only on doing (selfless) actions and never on their consequences.

It is almost in the style of Vivekananda that our poet utters these words:

'What steadfastness! What conduct! What form! What virtues! There is nothing in the properties of the Buddha which is not wonderful.'[2]

Let us go back to Vivekananda once again for a moment to strike the similarity of diction: शैली

'When the Buddha was born, he was so pure that whosoever looked at his face from a distance, immediately gave up the ceremonial religion and became a monk and became saved.'[3]

'Never that man bent. Direct and everywhere the same . . . sane and able man' (III. 528). 'Look at Buddha's heart' . . . See, what a largeheartedness! What a compassion!' (VII. 118). 'No blame attaches to the Lord (Buddha). He is pure and glorious' (III. 263).

The glories of the Buddha have been sung by the Buddhists and non-Buddhists, ancient and modern. The famous Tamil poet Sittalai Sattanar (*circa* 2nd cent. AD) has paid the following tribute to the Sage:

'O Lord! You are the Wise, the Pure, the Pious and the
Ancient, above all others in austerity.
O Lord! You destroyed the evils and discarded anger;
you are the Omniscient. सर्वज्ञानी
O Lord! You conquered Māra; you are the Blissful;
and you condemned the unholy and false ways.
O Lord! Your feet are marked with thousand-spoked wheels.

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[1] II.47. [2] *The Śatapañcāśatka*, verse 147. [3] *Complete Works*, III, p. 524.

I do not have thousand tongues!
How shall I praise thee!'[1]

The *Daśāvatārastotra* ('Hymn in praise of the Ten Incarnations') is attributed to the greatest teacher of Advaita Vedānta, Śaṃkara. In this *stotra*, the author describes the Buddha as the supreme *Yogin* and seeks His blessings.

In numerous medieval texts inspired by the Brahmanical cults, the Buddha is adored and eulogized as the ninth *avatāra* of God. We shall cite some of these sources in a subsequent chapter of this book. At the moment, let us hear some of the greatest of modern Hindu intellectuals who have paid their grateful tributes to the Buddha. Addressing a Buddha Jayanti meeting at Calcutta in 1925, Mahatma Gandhi said: 'I do not for one moment consider that Buddhism has been banished from India . . . It is impossible to banish Buddha . . . that great Lord, Master and Teacher of mankind. So long as the world lasts, I have not a shadow of doubt that he will rank among the greatest of teachers of mankind.'[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the foremost figures among modern Indian intellectuals and a sober student of history, who, in his ideas and ways, stood rather outside the assembly of traditional 'Hindus', has drawn the following remarkable picture of the Buddha's personality.

'The conception of the Buddha, to which innumerable loving hands have given shape in carven stone and marble and bronze, seems to symbolize the whole spirit of Indian thought, or at least one vital aspect of it. Seated on the lotus flower, calm and impassive, above passion and desire, beyond the storm and strife of this world, so far away he seems, out of reach, unattainable. Yet again we look and behind those still, unmoving features there is a passion and an emotion, strange and more powerful than the passions and emotions we have known. His eyes are closed, but some power of the spirit looks out of them and a vital energy fills the frame. The ages roll by and Buddha seems not so far away after all, his voice whispers in our ears and tells us not to run away from the struggle but, calm-eyed, to face it, and to see in life ever great opportunities for growth and advancement.'

'Personality counts to-day as ever, and a person who has impressed himself on the thoughts of mankind as Buddha has, so that even today there is something living and vibrant about the thought of him, must have been a wonderful man—a man who was, as Barth says, the 'finished model of calm and sweet majesty, of infinite tenderness for all that breathes and compassion for all that suffers, of perfect moral freedom, and exemption from every prejudice.' And the nation and the race which can produce such a magnificent type must have deep reserves of wisdom and inner strength.'[1]

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[1] *Maṇimekalai, Katai* V, lines 98-105 after A. Aiyappan and P.R. Srinivasan, *Story of Buddhism with Special Reference to South India*, Madras, 1960, p. 3.

[2] Quoted from A. Aiyappan and P.R. Srinivasan, op. cit., p. 5.

During the year-long celebrations of the twenty-fifth century of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* in 1956, a number of eminent Indian leaders and intellectuals paid homage to this 'Wonderful Man.' Brief extracts from the opinions of some of them are quoted below.

'It is characteristic of Buddha's immortal message that with the passage of time, far from becoming obsolete, it has become more radiant and shines today like a beacon-light' (Rajendra Prasad).[2]

'He (the Buddha) wrought the greatest miracle in the world, for he changed men's hearts from cruelty and hardness to compassion and gentleness' (C. Rajagopalachari).[3]

'Lord Buddha occupies a unique position in the annals of mankind. He is the greatest among those who have set out on a mission to save human beings from suffering; the first to transfer the emphasis from metaphysics to a life of practical righteousness and from individual salvation to the salvation of all beings . . . He has been the greatest Indian of the historic period (K.M. Munshi).[4]

'Gautama the Buddha and the Maurya emperor Āśoka are two of the greatest sons of India and the world, and their lives and achievements stand among India's best contributions to human civilization.'[5]

We may conclude this discussion of the glories of the Buddha with two short passages from a biography of the Buddha written by a distinguished living Gandhian leader, R.R. Diwakar.

'Today more than three hundred millions of Indians look upon Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, the Supreme Lord. Thinkers and intellectuals all over the world are interested in Buddha as almost the first rationalist and democrat in matters spiritual and

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[1] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, London, 1956, p. 121.

[2] *Buddha Jayanti Souvenir*, ed. by S.L. Sharma and P.L. Bhalla, New Delhi, 1956, p. 21.

[3] ibid, p. 37. [4] ibid, p. 27.

[5] D.C. Sircar, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, Delhi, 1957, p. 3.

religious. It may be said that nearly half the world is attracted in one way or the other by Buddha and his teachings.'

'But what is it,' he continues, 'that rouses to such a high pitch the interest of varied peoples in Buddha and his teachings? . . . It is not Buddhism so much, in its different religious forms, that attracts attention and exacts the homage of the non-Buddhist world, as the colossal spiritual and moral personality of Buddha and his simple teachings. It is the humanity of Buddha and the universality of his teaching that are the living fountain of interest for thinking and feeling humanity.'[1]

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

We cannot expect a complete and comprehensive picture of Buddhism or its tenets from the leaders of Hindu renaissance. For, Buddhist literature, discovered and published upto the end of the last century, formed only a very small part of the vast Buddhist literature extant in Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese. The number of books on Buddhism published by modern scholars in English, German, and French till 1902 was also small. It would appear that Swami Vivekananda was in touch with the progress of Buddhist studies in India and the West. He remarks that 'in English, French and German, there is quite a lot of Buddhistic literature. Buddhism itself is the most interesting of subjects, for it is the first historical outburst of a world religion.'[2]

It is not certain whether the Swami could read the Pali language. His knowledge of Sanskrit however, was excellent. According to Sister Nivedita, 'he, with his brethren, contrived to read together, not only the *Lalitavistara*, but also the great book of the Mahāyāna School of Buddhism, the *Prajñāpāramitā* in the original' in 1887.[3] In a footnote to this statement Swami Saradananda adds that 'these two books were then being published by the Asiatic Society under the able editing of Dr Rajendra Lal Mitra. The original text appeared in Sanskrit characters, and not in Pali, to help the general reader, who is familiar with the former but not with the latter.'[4] This second part of the footnote shows that in those days the non-expert Hindu students of Buddhism believed that Pali was the only language of the Indian Buddhist texts. As a matter of fact, the Buddhist literature existed in ancient India in nearly half a dozen languages, viz., Buddhist Sanskrit, Prakrit, Māgadhī, Gāndhārī, Pali and perhaps Śaurasenī. The *Lalitavistara* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* were in Sanskrit and published in Sanskrit in Nāgarī characters. They never existed in the Pali, and the question of helping the general reader by publishing them in Sanskrit was out of the question.

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[1] R.R. Diwakar, *Bhagawān Buddha*, Bombay, 1960, pp. 1 and 5-6.

[2] *Complete Works*, VIII, p. 511.

[3] Sister Nivedita, *The Master as I Saw Him*, 10th edn., Calcutta, Udbodhan Office, 1966 (originally published perhaps in 1910), pp. 252-53.

[4] ibid, p. 253fn.

Besides publishing the first editions of the Sanskrit texts of the *Lalitavistara* and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in the Bibliotheca Indica collection of oriental books, R.L. Mitra had also published in 1882 his famous book, *The Buddhist Sanskrit Literature of Nepal* in which he had given brief descriptions of 85 Buddhist Sanskrit texts. Harprasad Sastri had published the *Svayambhū Purāṇa* in 1894-1900. Several other important Buddhist Sanskrit books had been published in India and Europe during the life-time of Swami Vivekananda, e.g., *the Divyāvadāna*,[1] the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*,[2] the *Avadānakalpalatā*,[3] the *Jātakamālā*,[4] the *Bhaktiśataka* of Ramacandra Bharati,[5] etc. which may have been accessible to the Swami. Good English translations of several Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit texts had also appeared in the West. Thus the *Jātakamālā's* English translation by J.S. Speyer,[6] H. Kern's translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*,[7] the *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts* including the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghoṣa, and four other texts translated by E.B. Cowell, Max Müller and Takakusu,[8] the *Dhammapada* and the *Suttanipāta*, translated by Max Müller and V. Fausböll respectively,[9] and the *Dīghanīkāya*, first 13 *suttas*, translated by T.W. Rhys Davids[10] had been circulated among the learned before the start of the present century. Some of the most famous modern works were Henry Clarke Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*,[11] Oldenberg's *The Buddha*, an English translation of which by Hoey had appeared in 1882, Kern's *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, Rhys Davids' *Buddhism* and *American Lectures*. It seems that the Swami knew French. At least two important and early works on Buddhism in French were Eugéne Burnouf's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra, Lotus de la bonne Loi* and *Introduction*

[1] Cambridge, 1886.
[2] Paris, 1854.
[3] Calcutta, 1888f.
[4] Cambridge, Mass., 1890, *HOS*, no. 1.
[5] Darjeeling, 1896.
[6] *SBB*, I, 1896.
[7] *SBE*, XXI, 1884.
[8] *SBE*, XLIX, 1894.
[9] *SBE*, X, 1881.
[10] *SBB*, II, 1899.
[11] Harvard University Press, 1896.

à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien. It is noteworthy that Vivekananda does not frequently refer to Buddhist scholars and texts. But his knowledge of Buddhism, both of the so-called 'Hīnayāna' and the Mahāyāna, shows that he had done considerable amount of reading in Buddhist literature. I have come across only a few direct references to Buddhist scholars and sources in the works of the Swami.

There are numerous references to Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*;[1] he remarks that this book 'represents more of Vedantism than Buddhism' (VI. 97). The *Lalitavistara*[2] is referred to once, and the *Prajñāpāramitā*,[3] 'The Buddhist Mahāyāna book,' is mentioned twice. Aśoka's inscriptions are cited several times (IV. 289, 312, 376, 439; VIII. 276, 530-31) and his Rock Edict XII on religious concord is quoted in full (VII. 288). The *Dhammapada*[4] is referred to twice, and the *Suttanipāta*[5] and its *Dhaniyasutta* once. Amarasiṃha, the author of the *Amarakośa*, is quoted to show that the Buddha is called an Advayavādī, i.e., a teacher of non-dual Truth, and the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*[6] is also mentioned once. The Swami is said to have read the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.[7] He refers to the opinions of R.L. Mitra, Deussen, Max Müller, Schopenhauer, Oppert, Dharmapala, and Colonel Olcott, and others. He seems to have read the Buddhist texts published in the *Sacred Books of the East* series as well as the works of T.W. Rhys Davids, H. Oldenberg, and Eugéne Burnouf, although he does not refer to them by name.

THE BUDDHA'S RATIONALISM - हेतुवाद

Radhakrishnan says somewhere that 'If there ever was a rationalist it was Buddha.'[8] Vivekananda repeatedly emphasizes rational approach and soundness of the Buddha's outlook. The Buddha freed us from dependence on God and gods; He bent neither before the Vedas, nor priestly brāhmaṇas, nor the force of the customs. 'Believe no book; the Vedas are all humbug.'[9] This word, 'humbug,' is of course, too strong, and the Buddha did not use such strong words in his criticism of Brahmanism. 'He fearlessly reasoned so far as reason could take him.'[10] We have seen above that the Swami regarded the Buddha as 'the only sane man ever born.'[11] Sanity or the soundness of the mind and supreme self-reliance are two of the greatest virtues of the Great Master, according to him.

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[1] I. 86, 407; II. 61, VIII. 97, 511 etc. [2] II. 92.
[3] VI. 211 and 225. [4] IV. 349; VI. 227.
[5] VI. 227. [6] V. 171, 464. [7] VII. 206.
[8] *Buddha Jayanti Souvenir*, p. 35. [9] *Complete Works*, VII, p. 41.
[10] ibid, VII, p. 54. [11] ibid, VIII, p. 272.

Vivekananda has quoted several times the famous *Kālāmasutta*, without mentioning this source, though. There lived in the 6th century BC a community or tribe of the people called Kālāmas; their district, called Kesamutta, lay in the state of Kosala (modern eastern Uttar Pradesh). They had produced an eminent *śramaṇa*, an ascetic sage, named Ārāḍa Kālāma, who was for some time a teacher of Bodhisattva Siddhārtha. But this sage had died before Siddhārtha Gautama attained Nirvāṇa and became the Buddha. In the course of His preaching tours, the Buddha once arrived at Kesamutta where He taught Dharma to the Kālāmas. Some modern writers have described the *Kālāmasutta* as a 'Buddhist charter of freedom'.

Vivekananda sums up the message of this *sutta* as follows:

'These are the memorable words of Buddha: 'Believe not because an old book is produced as an authority. Believe not because your fathers said (you should) believe the same. Believe not because other people like you believe it. Test everything, try everything, and then believe it, and if you find it for the good of many, give it to all.' And with these words, the Master passed away.'[1]

The last statement is not true. The Master did not pass away at the city of the Kālāmas, nor after delivering the *Kālāmasutta*. The last words, uttered by the Great Master shortly before His passing away, are to be found in the *Mahāprinibbānasutta*. They are as follows: 'Well, monks, now I am addressing you. The constituents (or forces) of being (*saṃskāra*) are destined to fade away. You should accomplish (your release) through careful perseverance.' These were the last words of the Tathāgata.[2] He passed away at Kuśīnagara, the city of the Mallas.

Another summary of the *Kālāmasutta* presented by the Swami is as follows:

'Do not believe in what you have heard', says the great Buddha; 'do not believe in doctrines because they have been handed down to you through generations; do not believe in anything because it is followed blindly by many; do not believe because some old sage makes a statement; do not believe in truths to which you have become attached by habit; do not believe merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Have deliberation and analyse, and when the result agrees with reason and conduces to the good of one and all, accept it and live upto it.'[1] The Swami preached and emphasized the essential meaning of the *sūtra* and did not care for the exact words in the original. The occasion and the discourse of the Buddha were according to the Pali version, as follows. When the Buddha visited Kesamutta, the town of the Kālāmas, with a large body of monks, the Kālāmas came to see Him and said:

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 528.

[2] *Dīghanikāya*, Nalanda edn., 1958, I, p. 119.

'Sir, certain *śramaṇas* (ascetics) and brāhmaṇas come to Kesamutta. They declare and expound their own view fully; but they abuse, revile, depreciate and distort the view of others. Some other *śramaṇas* and brāhmaṇas likewise, having come to Kesamutta, behave in the same way. When we hear them, Sir, we waver and doubt as to which of these worthies is stating the truth and which stating falsehood.'

द्वैध [illegible]

The Buddha said: 'Certainly, Kālāmas, you may rightly waver, you may rightly doubt. Wavering does arise in a doubtful matter. Kālāmas, you should not be misled by report, or tradition, or hearsay: you should not be misled by the authority of scriptural collections, or by mere reasoning, or inference, nor after considering reasons, nor after reflection on and approval of some opinion, nor because of its good form, not out of respect for an ascetic sage (who holds it). Kālāmas, when you know for yourselves that these things are impure (or evil), these things are blameworthy, these things are condemned by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken, lead to loss and suffering then indeed, Kālāmas, you should reject them.'[2] The Buddha pointed out that greed, hatred, and delusion are the examples of things which lead to loss and suffering; freedom from greed, hatred and delusion is good and leads to well-being and happiness. The Teacher then added: 'Kālāmas, when you know for yourselves that these things are pure (or good), these things are praiseworthy and admired by the wise, these things, when performed and practised, lead to well-being and happiness,—then indeed, Kālāmas, you should practice them and be firm in them.'[3]

A similar advice was given by the Buddha to Bhaddiya, a Licchavi of Vaiśālī. He came to the Exalted One, and after saluting the Teacher, he sat at one side and said:

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[1] *Complete Works*, IV, pp. 216-17.

[2] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Nalanda edn., 1960, I, p. 174.

[3] ibid, pp. 175-76. In the Nalanda edn. the name of the town of the Kālāmas is given as Kesamutta.

'I have heard, Sir, that Gotama the Recluse is a juggler, that he knows a trick of glamour by which he entices away the followers of those holding other views . . . Now, Sir, do those who say thus express the views of the Exalted One and not misrepresent the Exalted One by what is not a fact? Do they speak in accordance with Dhamma?' The Buddha replied: 'Come now, Bhaddiya, be not misled by report or tradition or hearsay. Be not misled by proficiency in the books, nor by mere logic or inference, nor after considering reasons, nor after reflection on and approval of some theory, nor because it fits becoming, nor by the thought: the recluse is revered by us.'[1]

These passages show that the Buddha did not ask any one to accept His teaching as a matter of authority or out of respect for Him. No other prophet in the religious history of humanity is known to have acted and taught in this spirit of rationalism; all the prophets appealed to divine guidance and faith in superhuman agency. The essence of the Pali *Kālāmasutta* or the *Kesamuttisutta* is summed up in one beautiful Sanskrit verse by the famous Buddhist philosopher Śāntarakṣita. The Buddha is reported to have declared the following: 'O Bhikṣus, my words should be accepted by the wise, not out of regard for me, but after due investigation, just as gold is accepted as true only after heating, cutting and rubbing.'[2]

Among the disciples of the Buddha also we find that 'apart from belief, apart from inclination, apart from hearsay, apart from argument as to method, apart from reflection on and approval of an opinion,' the emphasis was on personal verification, empirical 6 and intuitional 5 knowledge, on 'knowing and seeing' the truths taught by the Teacher.[3] 5 अन्तर्ज्ञान से बोध 6 अनुभवसिद्ध

The emphasis on reason and experience is characteristic of Buddhism; in such a system of thought there is no room for any dogma or gospel as such. The Buddha is an authority, no doubt; His authority rests on His Enlightenment-experience which can be shared and verified by any one who makes the required efforts. The teachings of the Enlightened One may be said to have constituted the communicable part of His supersensuous experience of the Ultimate Truth. That part of the Buddha's teachings which constitutes the Way to this Ultimate Truth was at variance with the Vedic Way of the ancient brāhmaṇas. A small part of the Buddhist teachings therefore was concerned with a statement of what did not constitute the Buddhist Way. It was the Buddha's merit to be the first to point out what constituted the true Dharma and what was opposed to it. His intention was not so much to criticise Vedic Brahmanism as to clear the roads to freedom, to make conditions favourable for the growth of righteous life and sublime thought. Hence criticism of those practices, beliefs, ideas and institutions which were opposed to the Holy Path.

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Nalanda, II, p. 204; trans. by F.L. Woodward, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, II, p. 200.

[2] *Tattvasaṃgraha*, verse no. 3587 in the edition published by Dwarikadas Sastri, Varanasi, 1958, p. 1115; English trans. by Ganganatha Jha, Baroda, 1939, p. 1558, verse no. 3588.

[3] See e.g. *Saṁyuttanikāya*, Nalanda, 1959, II, pp. 98-101. English trans. by Mrs. Rhys Davids and F.L. Woodward, *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, part II, pp. 79-81.

Jawaharlal Nehru has made a remarkable observation about the Buddha's approach which seems to have attracted the attention of several modern intellectuals of India. 'Buddha had the courage', says he, 'to attack popular religions, superstition, ceremonial, and priestcraft, and all the vested interests that clung to them. He condemned also the metaphysical and theological outlook, miracles, revelations, and dealings with the supernatural. His appeal was to logic, reason and experience; his emphasis was on ethics, and his method was one of psychological analysis, a psychology without a soul. His whole approach comes like the breath of the fresh wind from the mountains after the stale air of metaphysical speculation.'[1] We are constrained to admit that we are not so sure about all these things as Nehru seems to be; Nehru's knowledge of Buddhism was derived from second-hand modern books by Indian writers of the Brahmanical school, and European writers of Older Anglo-German school. Much of what he says, however, is in conformity with the views of Swami Vivekananda. 'See the sanity of the man,' exclaims our Swami, 'no gods, no angels, no demons, no body. Nothing of the kind. Stern, sane, every brain-cell perfect and complete, even at the moment of death. No delusion.'[2] The Buddha is far superior to gods and angels. Moral and spiritual perfection is characteristic of His nature. He is an Awakened or Enlightened Being; Awakening is the very end of all delusion.

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[1] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 109.

[2] *Complete Works*, III, p. 528. See also IV, p. 136.

WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT

Vivekananda has emphasized in his speeches and writings the following elements of the Buddha's teaching: renunciation, meditation, unselfishness, universal brotherhood and equality of mankind, compassion towards all forms of life, sympathy for the poor and the miserable, non-violence or love, practice of moral virtues rather than theoretical speculation, the spirit of critical enquiry and rational attitude rather than submission to dogmas and traditional authority, fearlessness and uprightness in conduct, and constant effort to gain perfection.

Respect for the faith of other men is a characteristic of the Buddhist teaching. Although a missionary religion, 'it was one of the teachings of Buddhism not to antagonise any other religion.'[1] This is substantiated not only by the advice to the Kālāmas and Bhaddiya of Vaiśālī but also by the inscriptions of Emperor Aśoka. The Buddha did not try to convert anyone by conventional means such as claims to prophetic revelation, promise of salvation or threat of condemnation. He delivered His discourses and invited His audience to examine them and know for themselves their desirability and truthfulness.

The Swami says that the unique element in Buddhism was its social element[2] and that the Buddha was a social reformer. We cannot completely agree with this view, and we have already stated our position on this point. It is true, however, that as a result of spread of the teachings of the Buddha many social and religious evils, then current in India, declined and in some cases disappeared. The Buddha has been called 'a working Jñāni'.[3] This means that the Great Master's life offers an example of a man who combined meditation and action, wisdom and humanitarianism. The Buddha taught the practice of mind-control, meditation, and emphasized the cultivation of social emotions. He lived the life of a jīvanamukta, liberated while active and alive.

Vivekananda occasionally quotes from the Buddhist (Pali) texts what he considers to be the Buddha's words. It will be worthwhile to trace and locate some of them in the original as far as it is possible.

Almost the first words the great Buddha uttered were: 'what you think, that you are; what you think, that you will be.'[4] This statement paraphrases in a summary form, the first two verses of the Pali *Dhammapada*. These verses are not 'the first words' of the Buddha; they emphasize the importance of the mind in human life and activities. The Buddha says: 'All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage. All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.'[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, II, p. 497.
[2] ibid, V, p. 309. [3] ibid, I, p. 55. [4] ibid, III, p. 413.

In one of his lectures, the Swami recalled the message of Buddha as 'Take care, for everything in the world is evanescent, and there is always misery in this life.'[2] The first part of this sentence is possibly identical with 'the last words' attributed to the Tathāgata, quoted earlier in this section. The important meditative formula, *aniccā vat saṃkhārā uppāda-vaya dhammino* (the forces are surely impermanent, the constituents are destined to fade away), is a well-known passage in the Pali Canon.[3] The teaching of universal impermanence or evanescence is one of the three 'characteristics' (*lakṣaṇas*) which characterize all phenomena; the other two are suffering and not-self. The last part of the sentence, namely, that 'there is always misery in life' can be understood as a paraphrase of the Pali formula : *sabbe saṃkhārā dukkhā*.[4]

In another lecture on 'Lord Buddha', the Swami said: 'what did Buddha say with his dying breath? "None can help you; help your-self, work out your own salvation." He said about himself, Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky.'[5] The sources of these statements can partly be located in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*. The Buddha did not say: 'None can help you'. He pointed out the way; it was for the seeker to tread that way. He said: 'Be an island unto yourself; take refuge in yourself, take no other refuge.' He also said: 'you must accomplish your liberation through careful perseverance.'[6] As to the statement attributed to the Buddha 'about himself, we may draw the reader's attention to the famous line in the *Kevaṭṭasutta* where Nirvāṇa is identified with 'the

[1] *Dhammapada*, verses 1-2, trans. by F. Max Müller.

[2] *Complete Works*, IV, p. 132.

[3] *Dīghanikāya*, Nalanda, II, p. 120.

[4] *Dhammapada*, verses 277-79.

[5] *Complete Works*, IV, p. 136.

[6] *Dīghanikāya*, II, pp. 80, 119.

Consciousness which is infinite, invisible and shining everywhere.'[1]

According to Vivekananda, the Buddha's religion consisted of three 'discoveries': (i) the existence of 'evil' ; (ii) the cause of 'evil' which lay in desires and selfishness; and (iii) the cure of 'evil' which was possible by becoming 'unselfish'.[2] Here he is obviously referring to the famous 'holy truths' which are 'four': suffering (*dukkha*), the origin of suffering, the end of suffering, and the path leading to the end of suffering.

Force cannot cure the evil of selfishness. 'Dirt cannot wash dirt; hate cannot cure hate.'[3] Here the Swami is obviously summing up a verse of the *Dhammapada* which may be rendered thus: 'Never does hatred cease by hatred; it ceases by friendliness; this is the ancient rule (*dharma*).'[4]

Often the Swami attributes to the Buddha some views, which he puts within quotes, which cannot be traced to any Buddhist source, and may be treated as his own views rather than that of the Buddha. Though these views contain elements of the Buddha's teachings, the way they are stated is not precisely Buddhistic. Let us cite a few examples here. 'In the Buddha Incarnation the Lord says that the root of the *ādhibhautika* misery, or misery arising from other terrestrial being, is the formation of castes (*jāti*).'[5] The Buddha said: 'You are best, you are real, when you are not.'[6] 'Stop quarrelling, throw your books aside, be perfect.'[7] 'Love God and strive to be perfect.'[8]

To the brāhmaṇas the Buddha is made to say: 'True Brahmins are not greedy nor criminal nor angry—are you such? If not, do not mimic the genuine, real men. Caste is a state, not an iron-bound class, and every one who knows and loves God is a true Brahmin.'[9]

In these lines Vivekananda seeks to summarise the import of some verses of the *Brāhmaṇa-vagga* of the Pali *Dhammapada*. The term brāhmaṇa as employed in this work is understood as a synonym of an *arhat*, a perfected sage. A few verses describing the brāhmaṇa or the holy person of Buddhist conception are as follows.

'Who is meditative[4], blameless, settled, dutiful, without passions, and who has attained the highest end, him I call indeed a brāh-

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[1] *Dīghanikāya*, I, p. 190; *Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ*.
[2] *Complete Works*, II, p. 495. [3] ibid. [4] *Dhammapada*, verse 5.
[5] *Complete Works*, VI, p. 327.
[6] ibid, VII, p. 21. [7] ibid, II, 508.
[8] ibid, II, 509. [9] ibid, II, 508.

4. ध्यान-निमग्न. चिन्तनशील

maṇa.'[1] 'Him I call indeed a brāhmaṇa from whom anger and hatred, pride and envy have dropped like a mustard seed from the point of a needle.'[2]

'He who has no longings, who, through knowledge, is free from doubts, who has gained a firm footing in the Deathless (Nibbāna), him I call a brāhmaṇa.'[3]

The *Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta* of the Pali *Suttanipāta* also describes the ideal life of ancient brāhmaṇas and contrasts it with their recent descendants who have become degraded. The ancient 'seers' had 'praised chastity and moral conduct, uprightness, modesty, austerity, tenderness, inoffensiveness and patience.' But their modern descendants, the Buddha said, have become greedy, violent and protected by their castes, they have 'fallen into the power of sensual pleasures.'[4]

WAS THE BUDDHA AN AGNOSTIC?

According to the Swami Vivekananda, the Buddha was an 'agnostic'. After reading the preceding eulogy of the 'Great Master', this description of Him sounds striking and astonishing. It is well-known that the Buddha's teaching has embarrassed and puzzled all Theists and Deists. The Swami, it seems, liked to emphasize his peculiar view about the Buddha's alleged agnostic attitude. As is characteristic of his style, he speaks authoritatively and repeats the opinion he likes.

'Gautama Buddha', says our Swami, 'did not believe in a personal God or a personal soul, never asked about them, but was a perfect agnostic.'[5] He 'was perfectly agnostic about metaphysics or theories about God. He was often asked if there was a God, and he answered, he did not know.'[6] 'Buddha is expressly agnostic about God; but God is everywhere preached in our religion.'[7] In as much as this is an important element in the neo-Brahmanical attitude towards the Buddha and Buddhism, we must consider this in some detail.

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[1] *Dhammpada*, verse 386, trans. by Irving Babbitt, New York, 1965.

[2] ibid, verse 407, trans. by Max Müller.

[3] ibid, verse 411, trans. by Narada Thera, 2nd edn., Colombo, Vajirarama, 1972.

[4] *Suttanipāta* in *Khuddakanikāya*, Nalanda edn., 1959, I, pp. 311, 314; see an English trans. by V. Fausböll, *SBE*, X, pp. 49, 52.

[5] *Complete Works*, II, pp. 352, 484. [6] ibid, IV, p. 135. [7] ibid, VI, p. 120.

The Swami illustrates his opinion with a dialogue between the Buddha and some young brāhmaṇas. Although he does not refer to the source, we are almost sure that his version of the dialogue[1] is based on the *Tevijjasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*.[2] Two brāhmaṇas, Bhāradvāja and Vāseṭṭha, were debating as to which was the true path, and which the false. They went to the Buddha to settle their difference of opinion and to know the true way to union or companionship with Brahmā.

The dialogue as reconstructed by the Swami is as follows.

One of the brāhmaṇa young men said: 'My people teach this, and this is the way to truth.'

'Which is the right way, Sir?'

'Well, you say your people taught this is truth and this is the way to God?'

'Yes'.

'But did you see God?'

'No, Sir.'

'Your father?'

'No, Sir.'

'Your grandfather?'

'No, Sir.'

'None of them saw God?'

'No.'

'Well, and your teachers—neither (any) of them saw God?'

'No.'

And the Buddha asked the same to the others. They all declared that none had seen God.

'Well,' the Buddha said, 'in a certain village came a young man weeping and howling and crying: 'Oh, I love her so! oh my, I love her so!' And then the villagers came; and the only thing he said was he loved her so.

'Who is she that you love?'

'I do not know.'

'Where does she live?'

'I do not know.'

'How does she look?'

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, 525-26; IV, p. 135.

[2] See T.W. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, part I, *SBB*, II, pp. 300-19. The original Pali text in the *Dīghanikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, pp. 199f.

'That I do not know; but oh, I love her so.'

Then asked Buddha:

'Young man, what would you call this young man?'

'Why, Sir, he was a fool!'

And they all declared:

'Why, Sir, that young man was certainly a fool, to be crying and all that about a woman, to say he loved her so much and he never saw her or knew that she existed or anything?'

'Are you not the same? You say that this God your father or grandfather never saw, and now you are quarrelling upon a thing which neither you nor your ancestors ever knew, and you are trying to cut each other's throats about it.'[1]

This dialogue, as presented by the Swami, does not end in the unknowability of God. As a matter of fact, the question of the existence or non-existence of 'God' is not raised in this text. The dialogue only demonstrates the ignorance of the brāhmaṇas about God.

T. W. Rhys Davids whose English translation of this text the Swami seems to have read, made the following observation: 'The neuter Brahman is, in so far as I am aware, entirely unknown in the Nikāyas, and of course the Buddha's idea of Brahmā, in the masuline, really differs widely from that of the Upaniṣads.'[2] In the Pali texts Brahmā is one of the chief gods (*devas*), comparable in fame and popularity to Indra or Śakra. Some people, including the Buddhist followers, in the age of the Buddha believed in the possibility of rebirth in the world of Brahmā (*Brahmaloka*) after death. This heavenly state is called fellowship or union with Brahmā (*Brahmasahabyatā*). The two brāhmaṇas, Bharadvāja and Vāseṭṭha, who come to the Buddha to settle their dispute, are believers in the doctrine of the fellowship with Brahmā. The Buddhists believed that he who practises four great virtuous meditations, viz., *maitrī* or friendliness, *karuṇā* or compassion, *muditā* or sympathetic joy, and *upekṣā* or impartiality, is reborn in the heaven of Brahmā. These virtues are therefore called *brahma-vihāras*. But the highest Buddhist ideal was not to be born at all, not even in heaven; ultimate release from the round of birth and death and attainment of Nirvāṇa is the highest ideal of Buddhist endeavour.

[1] *Complete Works*, III, pp. 525-26.

[2] *Dialogues of the Buddha*, part I, p. 298.

२ - धार्मिक पूजापाठ संबंधी

Bharadvāja and Vāseṭṭha represent a dogmatic belief in the efficacy of Vedic rituals taught by the brāhmaṇas who possessed the knowledge of three Vedas (*tevijja*). The Buddha declares that these ritualistic paths do not lead any one to Brahmā's world. The existence of Brahmā is not even questioned by the Buddha. His stand is that invalid paths cannot lead to valid goals; performance of sacrificial rituals cannot lead to companionship with god Brahmā. This view is sought to be proved by the fact that none of the brāhmaṇas possessed of the knowledge of three Vedas has ever seen Brahmā face to face. 'Is there a single one of the brāhmaṇas versed in the three Vedas who has ever seen Brahmā face to face?' 'No, indeed Gautama.' The Buddha shows, in the language of the brāhmaṇas, that even the greatest of ancient Vedic seers such as Aṣṭaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Viśvāmitra, Āṅgirasa, Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu etc., did not claim to have known or seen 'where Brahmā is, whence Brahmā is, whither Brahmā is.'[1]

The heart of the matter is this that the brāhmaṇas, the teachers of ritualistic paths of the Vedas, are ignorant about Brahmā, yet they claim to know the paths leading to the world of Brahmā. The brāhmaṇas cannot show the way to a state of union with that which they do not know, neither have seen. The Buddha makes the brāhmaṇas to acknowledge that they do not know god Brahmā.

The idea of 'God' in the sense in which modern Hindus understand it is not discussed here. The Buddha, 'Knower,' 'Awakened,' 'Enlightened' cannot be called an 'agnostic.' In this *sutta* He demonstrates the ignorance of those possessed of the threefold knowledge. He concludes that 'the threefold wisdom of the brāhmaṇas, wise in their three Vedas, is called a waterless desert, a pathless jungle, a perdition.'[2]

३ - शून्य-वादी

It must be expressed in all humility, that Swami Vivekananda and others following him have misunderstood the implications of the *Tevijjasutta*. There is absolutely no evidence in this text for the view that the Buddha was 'agnostic.' Never did any one ask the Master any question about the existence or non-existence of 'God,' and never the Buddha admitted that He did not know about the existence or non-existence of 'God.' At least in the Buddhist Pali literature, there is no mention of such a question and such an answer as has been reported by the Swami. Indeed, the Swami himself notes once that the Buddha 'never preached that there was a God, nor did he deny there was a God.'[1]

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[1] *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 304. [2] ibid, p. 314.

On the other hand, the text says that the Tathāgata has neither doubt nor difficulty about the path which leads to the world of Brahmā. 'For Brahmā, I know, Vāseṭṭha, and the world of Brahmā, and the path which leadeth unto it. Yea, I know it even as one who has entered the Brahma-world, and has been born within it!'[2] It is not in an agnostic mood but in an omniscient mood that the Buddha says to brāhmaṇa Vāseṭṭha the following.

'Know, Vāseṭṭha, 'that a Tathāgata is born into the world, an *Arhant*, a Supremely Enlightened One, abounding in wisdom and good conduct, the Well-farer, Knower of the worlds, Incomparable. Guide of the mortals willing to be trained, a Teacher of gods and men, a Blessed One, a Buddha. By Himself, He thoroughly understands and sees, face to face as it were, this universe—including the worlds above with the gods, the death-gods (Māras), and the Brahmās; and the world below with its *śramaṇas* or ascetic sages and brāhmaṇas or priests, its lords and peoples. And, He makes His knowledge known to others. He proclaims the Dharma, both in the letter and in the spirit, a blessing in its beginning, a blessing in its middle, and a blessing in its end; the holy life does He make known, in all its purity and perfection.'[3]

According to the *Webster's New World Dictionary*, the word 'agnostic' was coined in 1870 by Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895). An agnostic is one who believes that the human mind cannot know whether there is a God or an ultimate cause behind the material phenomena.[4] Bertrand Russell, however, refers to 'Hume's agnosticism' as the source of a new kind of philosophy associated with Kant, Fichte, and Hegel.[5] Modern scepticism and agnosticism are thus traced to David Hume (1711-1776).

In modern Western philosophy, agnosticism is understood as the doctrine of unknowability of the Thing-in-itself. Agnostic

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[1] *Complete Works*, VII, p. 427.

[2] *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 315; *Dīghanikāya*, I, p. 210:
Brahmānaṃ ca ahaṃ, Vāseṭṭha, pajānāmi Brahmalokaṃ ca Brahmaloka gāminiṃ ca paṭipadaṃ, yathā paṭipanno ca Brahmalokaṃ upapanno taṃ ca pajānāmī.

[3] *Dīghanikāya*, I, pp. 210, 55; *Dialogues*, part I, p. 376.

[4] *Webster's New World Dictionary*, editor-in-Chief David B. Guralnik, second college edition, Calcutta, 1972, p. 27.

[5] Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, New York, 1945, p. 703.

Realism, for example, does not deny the existence of the unknowable. According to A. E. Taylor, "Agnostic Realism, while asserting the ultimate dependence of our experience upon a reality which exists independently of experience denies that we can have any knowledge of the nature of this independent reality. The independent reality by which all experience is conditioned is, on this view, an unknowable Thing-in-itself, of which we are only logically entitled to say *that* it certainly is, but that we do not in the least know *what* it is.'[1] Taylor criticises Agnostic Realism and rejects it as 'a doubly self-contradictory' theory. But he concludes that 'We cannot understand the concrete character of the Infinite Experience, or, to put it in a more homely way, we do not know how it would feel to be 'God.' And if this is Agnosticism, we clearly shall have to own that we too are agnostics.'[2]

4 अविश्वासी 5. प्रत्यक्षवादी

It may be mentioned in passing that sceptics and agnostics existed in ancient India especially in the age of the Buddha. Several verses in the *Ṛgveda* attest to the scepticism and agnosticism of the priestly seers. 'One and another say: "There is no Indra. Who hath beheld him?" Whom then shall we honour?' 'What thing I truly am I know not clearly; mysterious, fettered in my mind I wander.' 'Who verily knows and who can here declare it whence it was born and whence comes this creation? The Gods are later than this world's production who knows then whence it first came into being?'[3] This kind of scepticism or naïve agnosticism is unknown to the Buddhist tradition.

During the age of the Buddha and the Upaniṣads there were not only sceptics but also rationalist agnostics whose agnosticism was based either on reasoning or on moral fear. Yājñavalkya of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, for instance, expounds a kind of agnosticism based on reasoning. His description of transcendent Brahman as *neti neti*, and use of negative epithets for ultimate Reality in the Upaniṣads have been interpreted as a form of agnosticism. Deussen traced to Yājñavalkya's views, reported in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 'the primitive source of the entire conception of the unknowableness of the *ātman*.'[4] Following him, Jayatilleke finds in the

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[1] A.E. Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics*, London, 1961, pp. 68-69.

[2] ibid, pp. 71 and 412.

[3] *Ṛgveda*, VIII. 89.3; I. 164.37; X. 129.6; English trans. by Ralph T.H. Griffiths.

[4] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III, 8.8; IV. 5.15; Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 79.

Upaniṣads 'a rational agnosticism approaching Kantian agnosticism, where Yājñavalkya rationally demonstrated the impossibility of knowing the ultimate reality of the *ātman*.'[1] The Buddhist and the Jaina texts refer to sceptical and agnostic philosophers and religious teachers who flourished in the time of the Buddha and Mahāvīra. Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta is reported to have suspended judgement on what is good and what is evil, and on the existence and non-existence of the other world.[2] Sceptical, agnostic or ignorant teachers (*ajñānikāḥ*) are mentioned in the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*.[3] Śīlāṅka, the commentator of this Jaina *sūtra*, refers to the Ājīvikas, the followers of Gośāla, as wedded to *ajñānavāda*, or agnosticism. The Buddha was neither a sceptic nor an agnostic of the type known to the *Ṛgveda* and the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*.

At any rate, it is impossible to prove the Buddha's agnostic attitude towards 'God' on the strength of the Pali texts of the Tripiṭaka.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

The important points bearing on the question whether or not the Buddha was an agnostic are not concerning 'God' or Brahma but those that are called 'inexpressible questions' (*avyākṛta vastuni*). The Pali texts give a list of ten such questions while the Buddhist Sanskrit texts give their number as fourteen. The Pali word *abyākata*, Sanskrit *avyākṛta*, means 'unexplained' or 'unanswered'; the translation 'inexpressible' is confusing and incorrect. The ten points or theses, which the Buddha is reported to have refused to explain or answer, are the following:

1. The world is eternal.
2. The world is not eternal.
3. The world is finite.
4. The world is infinite.
5. The soul is identical with the body.
6. The soul is different from the body.
7. The perfected saint exists after death.

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[1] K.N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, London, 1963, p. 109.

[2] *Dīghanikāya*, I, p. 23; English trans. in T.W. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues*, part I, second *sutta*.

[3] *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, I. 1.2.17; II. 2.79, English trans. by H. Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras*, *SBE*, XLV, pp. 241, 315.

8. The perfected saint does not exist after death.
9. The perfected saint does and does not exist after death.
10. The perfected saint neither exists nor does not exist after death.[1]

K. N. Jayatilleke comments on the significance of Buddha's 'silence' on these questions in the following words. 'The problem is on what grounds these questions were unanswered. Were they in principle answerable though left unanswered? If so, were they unanswered because the Buddha did not know the answers to them (Scepticism, Näive Agnosticism) or was it because although he knew the answers, they were not relevant to the central problem of religion (Pragmatism). On the other hand, were they in principle unanswerable? If so, were the solutions beyond the grasp of the human intellect, transcending the limits of knowledge (Rational Agnosticism) or were the questions (logically) meaningless and therefore not admitting of an answer (Logical Positivism).'[2]

According to A. B. Keith 'The Buddha was a genuine agnostic.'[3] In other words, the Buddha did not know the answer to these questions; He was not a Supremely Enlightened One. This, of course, is too radical and sceptical an opinion, wholly opposed to the Buddhist tradition. 'Keith's solution,' observes Jayatilleke, 'that the Buddha rejected these questions out of ignorance is not only not supported by the texts but appears in fact to be contradicted by them.'[4]

3 - विधि-विरोध्य, प्रतिपक्ष
का सिद्ध

T.R.V. Murti finds in the 'unexplained' questions of the Buddhists a parallel with the antinomies of Kant. 'Reason involves itself in deep and interminable conflict when it tries to go beyond phenomena to seek their ultimate ground.' The Buddha was aware of this conflict in reason and therefore declared these questions as insoluble.[5] Jayatilleke thinks that the first four of the ten questions regarding the origin, duration and extent of the universe are left unanswered on the ground of rational agnosticism. The limitations of empiricism were recognized and the Pali Canon shows the aware-

4 - असीम
अनन्त

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[1] *Majjhimanikāya*, Nalanda edn., 1958, II, pp. 107ff.; *Udāna*, in *Khuddakanikāya*, Nalanda edn., 1959, I, pp. 142-43. For an English trans. see Henry Clarke Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 117-22.

[2] K.N. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 471.

[3] A.B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 63; cf. also ibid, pp. 44-45.

[4] K.N. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 473.

[5] T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, 1955, pp. 38, 40.

ness of 'the impossibility of discovering the truth about this question by empirical investigation.' But 'the other six questions appear to have been discarded on the grounds that they were (logically) meaningless.'[1] He further remarks that this resembles the solution of the 'Logical Positivist' of such questions. But he is careful to note the distinction between the Buddhist and the Logical Positivist and concludes as follows:

'The Buddhist while saying that it is meaningless to ask whether one exists in, does not exist in, is born in, is not born in Nirvāṇa, still speaks of such a transcendent state as realizable. The meaninglessness of these questions is thus partly due to the inadequacy of the concepts contained in them to refer to this state.'[2] In support of this he quotes the following verses from the *Suttanipāta* 'The person who has attained the Supreme Goal—does he not exist or does he exist eternally without ills; explain this to me well, O Sage, as you know it.' To this question, the Buddha gave the classical answer: 'The person who has attained the Supreme Goal is without measure; he does not have that with which one can speak of him.'[3] Edward Conze's translation of these verses is more forceful:

Upasīva: Does he who goes to rest not exist, or does he (last) for ever without disease? That, O Sage, do well declare to me, since this *dharma* is known to you.

The Lord: There is no measure to him who has gone to rest; he keeps nothing that could be named. When all *dharmas are abolished*, all paths of speech are also abolished.[4]

Whereof one can speak of him—that he does not have (*yena naṃ vajju taṃ tassa natthi*) and hence one has to be silent. In this respect alone it resembles the Positivist's outlook. 'Wittgenstein also says: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." This attitude has, however, to be distinguished from Agnosticism. It was not that there was something that the Buddha did not know, but that what he 'knew' in the transcendent sense could not be conveyed in words because of the limitations of language and of empiricism.'[5]

We must also mention the traditional explanations of unanswered questions. A categorical answer to the question as to whether the Tathāgata exists or is born after death is not possible. According to the Buddha none of the four possible answers 'fits the case,' or sufficiently describes the situation. A famous simile elucidates that 'like a fire, when its fuel is burnt up, He became tranquil.' The question 'in which direction has the fire gone' is by nature such as does not admit of a categorical reply. The *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* tells us that the Buddha has not categorically declared that any of the unanswered points was true or false. This was the view of Poṭṭhapāda, the wandering ascetic. To him the Buddha replied as follows: 'I have taught and established doctrines of which it is possible to make categorical statement, and I have taught and established doctrines of which it is not possible to make categorical statement.'[1]

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[1] K.N. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 475.
[2] ibid, p. 475.
[3] *Suttanipāta* in *Khuddakanikāya*, I, p. 430.
[4] Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 78-79.
[5] K.N. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 476 and note 1.

2. पैरा
तप स्वि

It should be stated also that only a small part of the Buddha's awakening was intellectually intelligible and orally communicable. Almost the first words of the Enlightened One emphasized the transcendental nature of the Reality (Dharma=Nirvāṇa). 'This Dharma that I have realized is profound, hard to see, hard to comprehend, serene, excellent, beyond logical thought, subtle, and to be realized by the wise.'[2] He who has realized it, the Supernal Being, is also profound and unfathomable even as the great ocean. He is incomprehensible even while living among men; He becomes much more incomprehensible and unthinkable (*acintya*) after discarding the human frame.

5 - व्यावहारिक;

Then there is the pragmatic or practical consideration. La Vallée Poussin called Early Buddhism 'pragmatique.' Mrs. Rhys Davids, while denying that the Buddha was a 'rationalist,' suggested that He may be called 'Utilitarian.' The test to be used, according to her, is 'what effect will this teaching produce on my life?'[3] Two discourses in the *Majjhimanikāya* teach that man must be interested only in truths which have a practical bearing on life. The one, dealing with the parable of the arrow, is taught in reference to the *avyākṛta* points. A man struck with a poisoned arrow must be concerned with removing the arrow and becoming well rather than be bothered by speculative questions about the nature of the arrow, who shot it, etc. It is stated that the 'unanswered' questions were set aside and

4- उपयो
-वादी,

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[1] *Dīghanikāya*, I, pp. 157-59.
[2] *Mahāvagga*, Nalanda edn., p. 61; *Majjhimanikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, p. 217.
[3] C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *Wayfarer's Words*, London, 1942, III, pp. 1103-04.

२. उत्पादक, बढ़ने वाला
3 पीछे का विसंवाद

not answered because 'it was not useful, not concerned with the essentials of religious life, and not conducive to revulsion, dispassion, cessation, peace, super-knowledge, awakening and Nirvāṇa.'[1] The other discourse, dealing with the parable of the raft, has the same moral note. The truths of Buddhism are useful for release; they should not be clung to. The Lord says: 'I teach you a *dharma* comparable to a raft for the sake of crossing over (the river or ocean of *saṃsāra*) and not for the sake of clinging to it.'[2] A man who has crossed over and realized the goal should discard the *dharma* just as a man after crossing over and reaching the other shore, discards the raft and does not take it home on his shoulders. This does not mean that the *dharma* is true only so long as it is useful; *dharma* continues to be true but its utility for him who has gone beyond ceases.

५ - विराग

5 बाधा,
यरोध,
ति,
हराव,

Finally, mention may be made of the parable of the Sīsapa leaves. The Buddha took a handful of Sīsapa leaves in the Sīsapa forest and said that what He has taught is like the leaves in His hand, and what He knew but did not teach is like the leaves in the forest.[3] In view of this statement made in the scripture, one is not justified in arrogating to oneself a right to say what the Buddha knew and what He did not know. Only a Buddha can know what a Buddha knows. Those who are ignorant and in bondage cannot understand the wisdom and freedom of the Tathāgata. One has to remove one's ignorance and liberate oneself from defilements and the self-system before one can make a judgement on the Buddha's knowledge.

The Pali texts refer to the theory of Issara (Īśvara) as the creator of the world and cause of pleasure and pain. The word Īśvara means 'Lord' or 'Master' and is often understood in the sense of 'God.' There were certain ascetic teachers (*śramaṇas*) and priestly preachers (brāhmaṇas) who maintained the view that Īśvara or 'God' was the creator of the world.[4] The Buddhists treated this as one of the many false views current at the time. The problem of the identification of Brahmā with Brahman and therefore with 'God' will be discussed in the fifth chapter of this work.[5]

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[1] *Majjhimanikāya*, Nalanda edn., II, pp. 110ff.
[2] ibid, I, pp. 179-80.
[3] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, Nalanda edn., IV, pp. 374-75.
[4] *Dīghanikāya*, III, p. 23; *Majjhimanikāya*, III, p. 11.
[5] See Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Buddhism: A Non-Theistic Religion*, trans. by Irmgard Schloegl, London, 1970.

WHY VIVEKANANDA WAS NOT A BUDDHIST?

Sister Nivedita informs us that the Swami Vivekananda visited Bodhagayā twice, first at the beginning of his missionary career, and again at the end of his life, on the morning of his thirty-ninth birthday. Sitting under the holy Bodhi Tree, he is said to have asked himself: 'Is it possible that I breathe the air He breathed? That I touch the earth He trod?'[1] At some stage during his tours in India, he is said to have been permitted to touch the sacred relics of the Buddha. 'A Buddhist', he said, to one who made a mistake about the name of his faith. 'I am the servant of the servants of Buddha.' As if even the title of a believer would seem, to his veneration, too exalted to claim.'[2]

We have noted earlier that to many of his American listeners, Vivekananda appeared as a Buddhist. 'Buddha has no truer disciple than this youthful priest, who, conscious of his own strength, boldly declares: "The morality of true Buddhism is the noblest yet given to the world." His tribute to 'Buddha, the Great Master, was touching in its grand simplicity, as it was admirable in its noble eloquence.'[3]

In spite of Vivekananda's undoubted profound veneration for the 'Great Master' and in spite of Nivedita's report, the fact remains that the Swami was not a Buddhist. He might well have asked the question: 'Why I am not a Buddhist?' and explained it in full. 'I am a Hindu,' said he in Chicago. On another occasion, he declared 'I am not a Buddhist, as you have heard, and yet I am. If China or Japan or Ceylon follow the teachings of the Great Master, India worships Him as God incarnate on earth. You have just now heard that I am going to criticise Buddhism, but by that I wish you to understand only this. Far be it from me to criticise Him whom I worship as God incarnate on earth. But our views about Buddha are that He was not understood properly by His disciples.'[4]

The Swami was possibly referring to his controversy with Anagarika Dharmapala, a pioneer of Buddhist renaissance, founder of the Maha Bodhi Society, and a Buddhist delegate to the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893. The Hindu worships the Buddha, says the Swami, 'Not, however, the creed which bears his name. What Buddha taught, the Hindoo believes, but what the Buddhists teach, we do not accept.'[1] This, of course, is different from what he said elsewhere. The 'Hindus' are 'Buddhists' in so far as they worship the Buddha as an incarnation of God; they are 'Buddhists' also for another reason, to wit, they accept the teachings of the Buddha. The Swami, let us not forget, was one of the very first in modern times to declare that the Buddha himself was a 'Hindu'. We shall have occasion in a subsequent chapter to review the extent to which the Buddha and His teachings influenced and shaped the course of Brahmanism-Hinduism. Here we want to examine what Vivekananda has to say about his attitude towards the Buddha's teachings.

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[1] Sister Nivedita, *The Master As I Saw Him*, p. 253.

[2] ibid, p. 254. See, however, *Complete Works*, VII, 481, where this statement is made in respect of Sri Ramakrishna.

[3] Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries*, 2nd edn., Calcutta, 1966, p. 548.

[4] *Complete Works*, I, pp. 5, 21.

'The life of Buddha has an especial appeal. All my life I have been very fond of Buddha, but not of his doctrine.'[2] 'I belong to the Hindu religion. That is not the Buddhists's creed.'[3] 'I cannot understand his doctrine. You know he denied that there was any soul in man—that is in the Hindu sense of the word. Now, we Hindus all believe that there is something permanent in man . . . we call Atman . . . And that there is something permanent in nature and that we call Brahman. He denied both of these. He said there is no proof of anything permanent. Well, I do not understand his doctrines—*We Hindus never understood it . . . I do not sympathise with his metaphysics at all.*'[4] When the Swami says that he does not accept many of the Buddha's teachings, he implies (at times clearly says) that he accepts some of the Buddha's doctrines, e.g., compassion, equality, renunciation, large-heartedness, unselfishness, etc. 'I do not believe many of his doctrines; of course, I do not. I believe that the Vedantism of the old Hindus is much more thoughtful, is a grander philosophy of life.'[5] 'Of course I do not endorse all his philosophy. I want a good deal of metaphysic for myself. I entirely differ in many respects, but, because I differ, is that any reason why I should not see the beauty of the man?'[6] No further comment is called for by these obvious declarations of the Swami's

[1] Marie Louise Burke, op. cit.; p. 548.
[2] *Complete Works*, VIII, p. 103.
[3] ibid, VIII, p. 287.
[4] ibid, III, 528-29. 'I do not agree with many of his doctrines.' ibid, p. 528.
[5] ibid, III, p. 526 'I am no Buddhist'; *Complete Works*, II, p. 478.
[6] *Complete Works*, IV, pp. 135-36.

likes and dislikes. These declarations seem to represent the general opinion prevalent among the modern Brahmanical Hindus. Nevertheless, vast majority of modern Hindus have to acknowledge the Buddha as an *avatāra* of God—Pauranic Hinduism has acknowledged it. The average Hindu's view about the Buddha can be summed up in the following words of Swami Vivekananda "The Lord Buddha is my ishta—My God. He preached no theory about Godhead—He was Himself God. I fully believe it."[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, VI. p. 227.

CHAPTER IV

Buddhism: Its Doctrines and Followers

THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

In the second chapter we saw how the modern Hindus have tried to present the Buddha as a 'Hindu' and Buddhism as a branch of 'Hinduism.' In the third chapter we had a glimpse of the grand eulogy of the Great Master and a profound appreciation of His teachings. We have also noted that the philosophical side of the Buddha's teachings did not find favour with many modern Hindus.

In the present chapter we shall endeavour to examine the Hindu attitude towards Buddhism and the Buddhists. As we said earlier, some modern Hindus make a distinction between the Buddha's teachings and Buddhism, between what the Great Master taught and what the Buddhists believed and preached. This double attitude towards Buddhism makes an interesting study.

It is well to remember that Swami Vivekananda was a keen student of the major religions of the world. He was one of the first few great modern Indian teachers who studied religions of non-Indian origin. And he was one of the first modern Indians to discover and emphasize the unity of religions. 'I studied the Christian religion, the Mohammedan, the Buddhistic, and others, and what was my surprise to find that the same foundation principles taught by my religion were also taught by all religions.'[1] The celebrated *Ṛgvedic* line; *ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*, 'Truth is one, the wise call it by various names' (1.164.46) and the synthesis presented by the *Bhagavadgītā* gave him traditional and scriptural authority for seeking and building unity and synthesis out of the religious experience of mankind. In addition to his study of the great religions, he had been touched and transformed by a living example of saintliness and religious harmony, Sri Ramakrishna. Recently Claude Stark has shown that Sri Ramakrishna's teaching of the harmony of religions had a profound impact on Vivekananda's thought.[1] Search for unity in the multiplicity and variety of religious thought of mankind became a central concern of his active life. He stressed integration and all-inclusiveness in almost all his lectures.[2] This feature is characteristic of many Hindus.

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[1] *Complete Works*, I, p. 318.

The search for unity and stress on harmony seem to have served to strengthen his faith in the supremacy of Vedantic Hinduism. He states: 'I found Hinduism to be the most perfectly satisfying religion in the world.'[3] The 'Hindu' in him found strong expression whenever he spoke of Buddhism. In those moments he even accused the Great Master of not understanding the harmony of religions and of introducing 'sectarianism.'[4] At times, he could even share traditional Brahmanical hostility towards those who profess a non-Brahmanical faith: 'Every man going out of the Hindu pale is not only a man less, but an enemy the more.'[5] In other words, converts from one religion to another are perverts. A man of strong likes and dislikes, Vivekananda honestly and unambiguously expressed his disapproval of certain aspects of Buddhist history. His preoccupation with Vedantic Hinduism and his desire to bridge the differences between the teachings of the Buddha and those of the Upaniṣads merit our sympathy and understanding. Our suspicion is that the Swami was seriously challenged by the doctrines peculiar to Buddhism. It is precisely because of these peculiar doctrines that Buddhism comes in for a general criticism in the Swami's programme of Hindu Renaissance.

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Vivekananda presents some Buddhist doctrines, points out the errors of the Buddhists, makes some observations on the history, spread and decline of Buddhism in India, and offers a strongly-worded criticism of all that he thinks is not good but associated with the Buddhists. Let us first see what he found wrong with the Buddhists.

THE ERRORS OF THE BUDDHISTS

A statement starkly against the usual sympathetic and enlightened position of Vivekananda is as follows: 'You may even believe the most peculiar ideas about the Godhead, but if you deny the authority of the Vedas, you are a *nāstika*. Therein lies the difference between the scriptures of the Christians or the Buddhists and ours; theirs are all Purāṇas and not scriptures. And so far as they agree with the Vedas, they are good. So far as the Bible and the scriptures of other nations agree with the Vedas, they are perfectly good, but when they do not agree, they are no more to be accepted. So with the Koran.'[1] These are the words of an 'orthodox Hindu.' We do not intend to enter into this age-old controversy. Vivekananda's conclusion is that all those Buddhist doctrines and practices which do not agree with the refined and reformed version of 'Vedantic Hinduism' are to be rejected.

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[1] Alan Stark Claude, *God of All: Sri Ramakrishna's Approach to Religious Plurality*, Cape Cod, 1974.

[2] See *Complete Works*, I, pp. 24, 438; II, pp. 107, 366, 374, 497; IV, p. 143; V, p. 286, etc.

[3] ibid, III, p. 448.

[4] ibid, VI, p. 120.

[5] ibid, V, p. 233.

A doctrine peculiar to Buddhism is that there is no creator God; another peculiar Buddhist doctrine is that there is no eternal soul or self. Buddhism is thus a non-theistic religion, and the idea that there is nothing durable and changeless which can be identified with one's self or 'one's own being' is fundamental to the Buddhist theory of liberation. The tenet of no-God (*anīśvaravāda*) and the tenet of not-self (*anātmavāda*) are thus the two striking things in Buddhism. These things have proved formidable, nay, insurmountable stumbling blocks not only for the Hindus of all shades, Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas, Advaita Vedāntins, Mīmāṃsakas, etc., but also for the Christians and the Muslims.

'The concept of God is a fundamental element in the human constitution,' says Swami Vivekananda. 'The embodiment of freedom, the Master of nature, is what we call God. You cannot deny Him.'[2] The Buddhists have denied God, nevertheless. It is not necessary to give here the Buddhist arguments against the reality of God.[3] About thirty years ago Helmuth von Glasenapp had given a few of the Buddhist arguments against theism in his book *Buddhismus und Gottesidee*. This has been now published in English translation and it is recommended to the interested reader.[4] It is remarkable that

[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 333.

[2] ibid, I, pp. 334, 336.

[3] Buddhist refutation of a creator God will be found in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* of Śāntarakṣita, ch. II, Baroda edn. in *GOS*, nos. 30-31, 1926, and Varanasi edn., 1968; English trans. by Ganganatha Jha, *GOS*, nos. 80, 82, 1937, 1939; and in the *Iśvaravāda* of Jñānaśrīmitra, ed. by Anantlal Thakur in *Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāvalī*, Patna, 1959, pp. 233-36.

[4] *Buddhism—A Non-Theistic Religion*, by Helmuth von Glasenapp trans. from the German by Irmgard Schloegl, London, 1970, ch. II, pp. 35-47.

Glasenapp has not used the *Tattvasamgraha*. A masterly exposition of the Buddhist critique of the belief in a creator God is to be found in this work (chapter on *īśvara-parīkṣā*, 'Examination of God') to be read along with the commentary (*pañjikā*) of Kamalaśīla.

Two of the greatest errors of the Buddhists thus consisted in avoiding God and avoiding soul. The Swamī regarded this avoidance as a kind of 'arrant lunacy.'[1] These two things were sufficient to distinguish Buddhism from Brahmanism, Vedānta and Hinduism. And our Swami could not overlook this fact. 'Buddhism is a great religion in some respects, but to confuse Buddhism with Vedānta is without meaning; anyone may mark just the difference that exists between Christianity and the Salvation Army.'[2] 'How, then, can the Hindu, whose whole fabric of thought centres in God, believe in Buddhism which is agnostic, or in Jainism which is atheistic.'[3] Many Hindus have often denounced the Buddha as an 'atheist.' 'I do not believe a Hindu can become an atheist.'[4] 'Hindus can give up everything except their God'[5] But 'the primitive Buddhists' did not believe in God and soul. The Burmese, the Siamese and the Ceylonese follow this primitive Buddhism.[6]

In his lecture on 'the common bases of Hinduism,' the Swami mentioned, among other things, that all Hindus believe in (i) the Vedas, (ii) God, and (iii) soul or *ātman*. It goes without saying, that all these three elements are absent in Buddhism. One of the marks of Brahmanical or Hindu orthodoxy is bibliolatry or 'book worship.' Reverence for the Vedas, the holiest of Brahmanical texts, is therefore a necessary characteristic of an orthodox Hindu whatever sect he may belong to. The Buddhists treated the Vedas as priestly compositions, containing 'false views' and religiously useless ritualistic injunctions. But as the Swami says, 'Even God incarnate as man must conform to the Vedas, and if His teachings do not so conform, they will not take Him. Buddha is worshipped by the Hindus, but if you say to them. "If you worship Buddha, why don't you take His teachings?" they will say, because they, the Buddhists, deny the Vedas. Such is the meaning of book worship.'[7]

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 281.
[2] ibid, I, p. 349.
[3] ibid, p. 18.
[4] ibid, III, p. 304.
[5] ibid, VIII, p. 99.
[6] ibid, VI, pp. 95, 97.
[7] ibid, IV, p. 42.

The errors of the Buddhists did not stop with neglecting God, *ātman* and the Vedas. A section of them, including the Buddha, it is alleged by some, neglected Sanskrit language. 'Even the great Buddha,' says Vivekananda, 'made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses.' He spoke in the people's language and his ideas spread quickly, knowledge reached far and wide. 'Knowledge came, but the prestige was not there, culture was not there.'[1] This is a view peculiar to traditional Sanskritistic Brahmanism. Our view is that Sanskrit was a class language; it signified culture but a particular kind of culture, the Brahmanical culture, so that Sanskritization amounted to brahmanization. The prestige of Sanskrit was also confined to those sections of the people who had been Sanskritized and brahmanized. It is a very narrow-minded view to think that where there is no Sanskrit there is no culture. Are all non-Sanskrit speaking people without culture and prestige?

As a matter of fact, it is wrong to say that the Buddha stopped the study of Sanskrit language by the masses. It was not studied by the masses at any time in its history. It had always been a language of the elite, of the high-born and the rich. There is no evidence for the view that the Buddhists stopped or prohibited the study of Sanskrit. A passage in the Pali *Cullavagga*, a text of the *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, reports only this much that the Buddha refused permission to two of his disciples, who came from brāhmaṇa families, to codify the Buddha's Word in Vedic speech. He asked His disciples to learn the teaching in their own languages, so that it would be accessible to all classes and masses.[1] The Dharma which had been broadcast for the benefit and happiness of all the people was not to be closed or confined to the limits of one particular language.

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, 291; 298-99: 'Why do you not become Sanskrit scholars? . . . That is the secret of power in India . . . Sanskrit and prestige go together in India. As soon as you have that, none dares say anything against you.' This may have seemed true in the days of Vivekananda when there was growing a world-wide interest in Sanskrit and Indological studies. The simple illiterate folk of India who have been taught that Sanskrit is the language of gods, brāhmaṇas, sages and paṇḍitas, may still associate prestige with Sanskrit. In the present century, English acquired the position which once belonged to Sanskrit. Mere knowledge of Sanskrit no longer carries prestige even in India. One must know English also. The late Mahāpaṇḍita Rāhula Sānkrityāyana once remarked that 'If you want to make a man fool, teach him Sanskrit.' Poor brāhmaṇas who have spent many years in the study of Sanskrit grammar, and acquired excellent knowledge of some traditional Brahmanical texts, who can speak fluent Sanskrit but cannot write their names in English, are, even today, found in several parts of India. Most of them are unemployed, unhonoured, poor and without any power or prestige whatsoever. It is true, however, that Sanskrit continues to enjoy prestige and importance in the English educated circles of professional scholars and intellectuals. An Indian historian or philosopher, who does not know Sanskrit cannot have good reputation or prestige.

As a matter of fact, the Buddhists were not opposed to any language whatsoever. They wrote and taught and studied Sanskrit; the Buddhist literature in Sanskrit was more extensive than in the Pali. In fact, the Buddhists tried to popularize Sanskrit and spread it among the masses. They developed a new kind of Sanskrit, the Buddhist Sanskrit, which is the language of a large number of Buddhist *sūtras* and *śāstras* belonging to the Sarvāstivāda, Mahāsāṃghika, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna schools.

THE BUDDHISTS MISUNDERSTOOD THE BUDDHA

An important element in Vivekananda's interpretation of Buddhism is that the Buddhists 'misunderstood' and misinterpreted the teachings of the Great Master. This is how he explains away the difference between Buddha's teachings and Buddhism. He declares: 'Our views about Buddha are that he was not understood properly by his disciples;' 'it was his own followers who did not realize the import of his teachings.' The error of misunderstanding consisted chiefly in not seeing the 'truth' that the Buddha's teachings were 'the fulfilment of the truths of the Hindu religion.'[2]

A question may be asked: In what sense was Śākyamuni a 'Hindu'? Can He, who denied not only a Creator-God and an eternal changeless soul or *ātman*, but also the authority of the Vedas, be still called a 'Hindu'?

Vivekananda, Rhys Davids, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Radhakrishnan and others who insist on saying and believing that the Buddha was a 'Hindu,' have to resort to theistic interpretation of Buddha's historic 'silence' and to the theory of Buddhists' misunderstanding of their Teacher's discourses. T.W. Rhys Davids believed that 'Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu . . .' and that 'Buddhism grew and flourished within the field of orthodox belief.'[3] C.A.F. Rhys Davids had assumed that 'Gotama was both teaching and expanding the immanent cult of his day.[1] Coomaraswamy had imagined that the Pali texts had in describing the transcendent nature of the Buddha only 'retold' 'the doings of Brahma as Agni and Indra.'[2] And Radhakrishnan found in Buddhism 'only a restatement of the thought of the Upaniṣads' with a new emphasis.[3] Referring to the 'silence' about the set aside questions, he observed: 'To me the silence is not a proof either of denial or agnosticism . . . Silence is on occasions the only language of true worship. . . . Our thoughts of God are always images though they may not be graven images.'[4] These views cannot be supported by the Buddhist texts; they are, in fact, contradicted by the canonical and non-canonical texts of the Buddhists. Modern Buddhists are also opposed to these views. A theory which offers such a skilful interpretation of Buddha's teachings as is not in accordance with the Buddhist tradition and is evidently contradicted by the Buddhist texts can hardly find a secure position in Buddhist studies.

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[1] *Cullavagga*, Nalanda edn., p. 229.

[2] *Complete Works*, I, p. 21.

[3] T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 83-85.

A basic question is this: If the disciples of the Great Master did not understand His teachings properly, who else understood them? It is a very radical and ridiculous proposition indeed to say that Ānanda, Śāriputra, Mahākāśyapa, Nāgasena, Nāgārjuna, Buddhaghosa, Vasubandhu, Dharmakīrti, Śāntideva and Śāntarakṣita and others of their tradition, misunderstood and misinterpreted the teachings of the Buddha, and that the modern Hindus have found out the correct and real meaning of the Buddha's Word. In order to vindicate the theory of Vedic-Brahmanic origin of Buddhism one has to go to the extent of falsifying the cardinal principles of classical Buddhism. We cannot accept such a theory.

A study of Brahmanism and the Vedānta is quite useful and even important for a proper historical understanding of the growth of Buddhist doctrines and practices. But 'it is nevertheless quite possible to treat Buddhism as an autonomous system which is perfectly intelligible on its own premises.'[5] The tendency to interpret Buddhism in the light of refined and reshaped Brahmanism cannot yield valid results. To say that Hinduism includes all religions, including Buddhism, may be all right, so far as it goes. But to say that Buddhism does not represent the teachings of the Buddha because it differs from the 'Hindu religion' of the Upaniṣads is something quite fantastic. Edward Conze remarks that 'There has been a persistent tendency to attribute to primitive Buddhism the Upanishadic teaching of the self, or *ātman*. Little can be adduced from the existing Scriptures in support of this thesis, but it has been the curse of Buddhist studies that people will persist in believing that the Buddhists must have radically misunderstood the Buddha.'[1] Mrs. Rhys Davids was especially attached to this belief and she dismissed the *anatta* doctrine as a 'monkish gibberish.' It is extremely difficult for most people to acquiesce in the profound doctrine of 'not-self.' For Swami Vivekananda the dismissal of God idea was particularly unintelligible. It was chiefly for its non-theistic philosophy that Buddhism did not find support with him. The ideas of God and soul were, for him, essential to every religion. But as T.R.V. Murti says, 'Nothing is gained by the theory of a soul-affirming primitive Buddhism followed by a soul-denying scholastic Buddhism. . . In attempting to bridge the difference between the Upaniṣads and Buddha, we would have immeasurably increased the distance between Buddha and Buddhism. We cannot find any sufficient and compelling motives for the falsification of the original teachings.'[2]

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[1] C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 26.

[2] A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 75.

[3] S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, I, pp. 375-76; cf. p. 360.

[4] S. Radhakrishnan, 'The Teaching of Buddha by Speech and Silence' in *The Hibbert Journal*, 32, pp. 350ff.

[5] Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, p. 33.

Vivekananda, true to the tradition he belonged, could not forgive the Buddhists for attacking what he calls 'the eternal rocks of the Vedas' and for 'taking away from the nation that eternal God' to which all men and women cling fondly.[3] He thinks that the Buddhists 'were not able to keep' safe the great and good points of the Buddha's teaching.[4] He further blames the Buddhist monks for misunderstanding the Master's teaching of equality and for creating 'a church with superiors and inferiors.'[5] Here he is possibly referring to the categories of *śrāmaneras* or novices, *bhikṣus* or fully ordained monks, and *sthaviras* or the senior monks who have spent ten or more years in monastic life. These categories or grades of monks are based on the considerations of religious experience, moral training and education. Perhaps there is some ground for complaining that in some Buddhist sects needless importance was given to mere fact of seniority.

[1] Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, pp. 12-13.

[2] T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, 1960, p. 25.

[3] *Complete Works*, I, p. 22. [4] ibid, p. 349. [5] ibid, p. 425.

Differences in the progress and moral attainments of individual monks are bound to exist and paying due regard to these differences need not be interpreted as a practice of unequality.

On the one hand, the Swami pays excellent tributes to the Buddha for teaching equality, universal brotherhood, and for opening the doors to immortal religious truth for all human beings; on the other hand, he declares that the 'Buddha made the fatal mistake of thinking that the whole world could be lifted to the height of the Upanishads.'[1] Kṛṣṇa of the *Gītā*, he thinks, was 'wiser' because he was 'politic.' Vedic-Brahmanic scheme of four ends (viz., *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*, performance of caste-duties, securing material prosperity, pursuit of legitimate desires, and finally seeking liberation) was the best as it devised diverse ways and means. The 'Buddha ruined us' just as Christ ruined Greece and Rome.[2] The fault of the Buddha was that He disregarded the '*jāti-dharma*'—the duties according to the caste—the doctrine of *svadharma*, of one's own duty, 'which is the very basis of Vedic religion and Vedic society.'[3] By Vedic religion he means the Purāṇic religion such as is taught in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Gītā*.

Although the Swami is usually critical of the Brahmanical caste-system, at times he seeks to justify it. He maintains the startling view that the caste-system was not a religious institution but only a social institution. 'Beginning from Buddha down to Ram Mohan Roy, everyone made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down religion and caste all together, and failed.'[4] As a matter of fact, from the *Ṛgveda* down to the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Tulasīdāsa (16th century), *varṇa* ('colour') identified with *jāti* ('birth,' 'caste') has always been taught as a religious institution. The *Bhagavadgītā* declared it to be a divine creation.[5] Attempts to reform the caste-system by great teachers from the Buddha to Ram Mohan Roy have failed because of Brahmanical resistance to these reforms and because of deliberate persistence of Brahmanical orthodoxy. In the Brahmanical tradition religion and society had been inseparably connected and a clear-cut demarcation between social duties and religious duties was hardly made by the Brahmanical law-makers.

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[1] *Complete Works*, VIII, p. 271.
[2] ibid, V, p. 454. [3] ibid, p. 455.
[4] ibid, p. 22.
[5] *Bhagavadgītā*, IV. 12: "I have created the four castes."

Vivekananda credits Śaṃkara with having demonstrated that 'the real essence of Buddhism and that of the Vedānta are not very different but that the disciples did not understand the Master and degraded themselves, denied the existence of the soul and of God, and have become atheists.'[1] This is an amusing interpretation of the bridges of understanding between Mahāyāna thought and Advaita Vedānta. We shall return to this topic in our treatment of the Buddhist legacy in the last chapter.

BUDDHIST DOCTRINES STATED

Vivekananda treats of miscellaneous subjects of Buddhist history and doctrines in several of his lectures. But all his statements about Buddhism are rather casual and brief. It is difficult to construct a complete and comprehensive picture of the history and doctrines of Buddhism on the basis of his statements. There is, however, no need to make a compilation of his views. We can perhaps have a glimpse of his attitude to Buddhism through these statements. We quote his views in order to criticize them.

At one place he seems to view Buddhism as a 'religion of utility.' The Buddhists, he says, are popular in the West because they do not care whether there is God or not, whether there is soul or not; they say there is sorrow in the world, let us try to help this world.[2] He refers to certain Buddhist philosophical theories without referring to the schools which held them. The doctrine of impermanence or transitoriness of things is often referred to by him. The Buddhists, according to him, do not posit any substratum as the background of body and mind, and their 'arguments are very powerful . . . reasoning very strong.'[3] They say that this world itself is self-sufficient, that it does not need any background; the sense-universe does not need any substance to support it; there is nothing unchangeable behind the changing aggregates of qualities. He concludes that 'so far as the Buddhists say that the whole universe is a mass of change, they are perfectly right . . . But the reality is that there is both change and changelessness in this universe.'[4] Strictly speaking, this statement that the universe is both changing and unchanging, that it is impermanent as well as permanent, is not in keeping even with the non-dual Vedānta. According to Śaṃkara, this universe is unreal (*mithyā*), only the Absolute (*brahman*) is the reality. That which is unreal is subject to change; but the Absolute, which is wholly different from the changing universe, is changeless. This changeless or permanent reality is transcendent. There is a view known to some Brahmanical sects according to which the ultimate reality is both immanent as well as transcendent. Perhaps the Swami is referring to this view. It is not our intention to discuss here the difficulties and contradictions inherent in such a view.[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 265.
[2] ibid, I, p. 514.
[3] ibid, II, p. 271.
[4] ibid, p. 274.

'The Buddhistic idea that whatever we see is the will,' says the Swami, 'is psychologically entirely wrong.'[2] The Buddhistic schools, however, do not hold such a view, and to attribute this opinion to Buddhists is clearly wrong. The Swami is perhaps referring to the Vijñānavāda Buddhists who maintain that whatever we see in the outside world is a reflection of consciousness (*vijñāna*). The Vijñānavādin holds that Vijñāna or Consciousness is the only ultimate reality, the external objective world of duality and plurality is a mere appearance, an illusion.[3]

The Buddhists are described as upholders of the tenet of momentariness (*kṣaṇikavādins*). All the theories of substance were thrown to the ground by them. The theory of momentariness is also used against the dualistic theists.[4]

The Swami says that the Buddhists taught that 'only the monks could reach nirvāṇa, something similar to the Christian heaven.' This resulted, on the one hand, in the unnecessary popularity of monasticism, and on the other hand, in the degradation of women. 'The development of all monasticism always meant the degeneration of women.' This is said equally of the Buddhist, the Jinist, and the Christian forms of monasticism.[5] This view is only partly true. On the other hand, we should not forget the fact that women had the full freedom of religious growth in all these monastic

[1] See *Tattvasaṃgraha*, ch. VIII; Satkari Mookerji, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, Calcutta, 1935; Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, New York, 1962, I, pp. 79-118.

[2] *Complete Works*, II, p. 446.

[3] See *Vijñaptimātratā-Siddhi-Prakaraṇadvayam*. ed. with Hindi trans. by Thubten Chogdub and Ramasankara Tripathi, Varanasi, 1972; S. Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton, 1957, pp. 328ff.

[4] *Complete Works*, III, pp. 410-11.

[5] ibid, II, pp. 505-06.

institutions. A monk, who has to keep the precept of celebacy, has to be warned against the possible dangers of contact with women. The intention was not to degrade women but to keep the monks pure and free from lust and passion. The ascetic ideal of renunciation and holy life constituted an extraordinary norm, open to both male and female seekers. It was to be practised outside the pale of social and worldly life. From the standpoint of an ascetic or an ordained monk, women are only as much undesirable as wealth and other possessions.

The history of Buddhist culture in India and other countries of Asia shows that the growth of Buddhist monasticism did not result in the degradation of women. It seems that the Indo-Āryan system of patriarchy had something to do with the degeneration and supression of women in Indian society. During the period of Muslim domination traditional restrictions on the liberty of women were tightened largely to avoid racial and cultural fusion. The vicissitudes of women in Indian history were due to a number of historical factors a discussion on which is beyond the scope of this book.[1]

The charge that 'the Bauddhas tried to make everyone in India a monk or a nun'[2] is not true. Buddhism is not a religion only of monks and nuns. Even in the Theravāda form of Buddhism we have a clear and detailed treatment of the twofold Dharma; the rules and practices of the life of monks (*bhikṣus, śramaṇas*) are different from those of the laity (*gṛhapatis, upāsakas*). The monks and nuns are encouraged to strive for the attainment of the state of an *arhat* while the lay men and women are generally taught to live a religious life so as to lead to rebirth in happy states (*svarga*). The highest ideal of Nirvāṇa is taught along with the lower goal of heaven.

According to Vivekananda the early Buddhists maintained that 'everything is unconnected' and thus precluded the theory of causation.[3] This is far from the Buddhist doctrine of change. As a matter of fact, the Buddhist doctrine of conditioned co-production or dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is generally interpreted as the law of causation. The origin and the end of suffering (*duḥkha*) are explained by this law of dependent origination. The Abhidharma schools of Buddhist philosophy have, in fact, given too much attention to the systematization, classification and explanation of causes

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[1] See A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, 3rd edn., Delhi, 1962.

[2] *Complete Works*, V, p. 317. [3] ibid, VI, p. 95.

(*hetu*) and conditions (*pratyaya*).[1] Śākyamuni is celebrated as the Teacher and Knower of the causes of all those things that are born of causes.[2] The Buddha, as the texts show, used the so-called 'Chain of Causation' to explain suffering, *karma* and rebirth. The doctrine of dependent origination is a characteristic Buddhist doctrine often used in criticizing eternalist and materialist doctrines. Several modern scholars have published excellent discussions of this doctrine so that we can pass over it here.[3]

Vivekananda says that the Buddhist emperor Aśoka 'punished those who would perform *yajñas* or offer meat to the invited at any ceremony.'[4] This is not correct. The Emperor, in his first Rock Edict, lays down that no animal should be sacrificed by slaughtering. He himself gave up hunting and almost completely stopped the slaughter of beasts for royal kitchen. There is no evidence for the view that he 'punished' those who performed sacrifices (*yajñas*).

At one place the Swami makes some striking statements about Buddhist thought; 'Buddhism proves nothing about Absolute Reality.' 'Buddhists,' he continues, 'do not postulate anything beyond the world. We say, beyond the relative, there is the absolute. Buddhism accepts that there is misery, and sufficient it is that we can get rid of this *duḥkha* (misery); whether we get *sukha* (happiness) or not, we do not know.'[5] These statements are based on a misunderstanding about Buddhist doctrines.

The Absolute Reality (*paramārtha satya*) in Buddhism is called Dharma or Nirvāṇa. This Reality or Dharma, according to the Buddha is 'profound, difficult to see, difficult to understand, excellent, pre-eminent, transcendental to discursive reasoning, subtle, and to be grasped by the wise alone.'[6] If Buddhism does not prove anything

दुर्बुध्य,
ज्ञा.
दुर्ज्ञाय,
तिगंभीर
अत्युत्तम
चंचल
वचादि
अतिसूक्ष्म
लक्षण.

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[1] See for example, *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa, ch. XVII, Pali text ed. by Henry Clarke Warren and Dharmananda Kosambi, Cambridge, 1950; English trans. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification*, Colombo, 1956.

[2] *Mahāvagga*, p. 39: 'The Great Sage teaches that the Tathāgata has spoken of the cause of things born of causes, and also of their cessation.' This passage occurs in numerous Pali and Sanskrit texts as well as in inscriptions.

[3] See, e.g., K.N. Jayatilleke, op. cit., pp. 464ff; Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 144ff; Nolan Pliny Jacobson, *Buddhism: The Religion of Analysis*; Y. Karunadasa, *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, Colombo, 1967; Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism*, reprinted, Calcutta, 1956; A.K. Warder, op. cit., ch. 5. [4] *Complete Works*, V, p. 482. [5] ibid, VI, p. 119.

[6] *Mahāvagga*, p. 6; see the English trans. by Rhys Davids and Oldenberg in *SBE*, XII, p. 84.

about the Ultimate Truth, no other religion can be said *to prove* anything about it. Absolute Reality or Ultimate Truth is not something which can be *proved;* the Buddhist view is that it is beyond the reach of proofs and beyond reasoning. The Buddha realized the Reality; He pointed out the way to its realization. This way is the Buddhist Way. Anyone, who can follow the Way, can verify its validity. The truth or the validity of Buddhism consists in this that its practice leads to the realization of the ineffable Reality which passeth understanding.

2-अकथनीय

To say that the Buddhists do not postulate anything beyond the world is tantamount to saying that the Buddhists are materialists, a view against which every page of the Buddhist Scriptures can be cited as an evidence. The world or *saṃsāra* is conditioned, impermanent and subject to change; existence in *saṃsāra* (or the realm of birth, old age, decay, death and rebirth) is undesirable. This is the starting point of Buddhism. On the other end, wholly transcendent, is Nirvāṇa, the Reality (*tattva*) which is non-dual (*advaya*) and eternal (*amṛta*). This is the final goal of the Buddhist religious culture. It is this Unthinkable (*acintya*), Unutterable (*avācya*) and Unfathomable (*aprameya*), Supreme (*parama*) Good (*śiva*) which is accepted as the Absolute Reality in Buddhism. A famous and frequently quoted passage in the *Udāna* reads as follows:

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'Monks, there exists that sphere wherein is neither earth nor water nor fire nor air; wherein is neither the sphere of infinite space nor of infinite consciousness nor of nothingness nor of neither-consciousness-nor-unconsciousness; where there is neither this world nor a world beyond nor both together nor moon and sun. Thence, monks, I declare is no coming to birth; thither is no going (from life); therein is no duration; thence is no falling; there is no arising. It is not something fixed; it moves not on, it is not based on anything. That indeed is the End of Ill.'[1] Such is the nature of the ineffable Nirvāṇa. It would seem that Vivekananda had no access to this remarkable passage, otherwise he would not have said that the Buddhists do not postulate anything beyond this world.

There is another passage in the *Udāna* which describes the supreme State (*pada*) called Nirvāṇa with several adjectives.

'Monks, there is an Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Uncompounded.

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[1] *Udāna*, VII, 1; English trans. by F.L. Woodward, *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, pt. II, London, 1948, p. 97.

1- अतिक्रमण करना

Monks, if, that Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Uncompounded were not, there would be apparent no escape from this here that is born, become, made, and compounded.'[1] Nirvāṇa transcends positive and negative statements. The Buddhist philosophers like Nāgārjuna have taught that those who dogmatically adhere to the theory of 'is' are extremists (*ekāntikas*). The Middle Doctrine of the Buddha transcends the dogmas of 'is' and 'is not.' २. दुराग्रहपूर्वक ।

Although Nirvāṇa is described often in negative terms, positive descriptions are also found in the ancient texts. Occasionally we find that Happiness, also called Peace, is identified with Nirvāṇa. Consider the following three verses:

'There is no fire like lust; there is no blemish like hatred; there is no suffering like this body; there is no happiness superior to Peace. Hunger is the greatest disease; this body is the supreme (source of) suffering; having known this as it really is (the wise realize) Nirvāṇa as the Supreme Happiness. Health is the greatest gain; contentment is the greatest wealth; confidence is the greatest friend; Nirvāṇa is the Supreme Happiness.'[2]

The destruction of suffering (*duḥkha*) results in the attainment of Happiness or Bliss (*sukha*); the end of *saṃsāra* results in the attainment of Nirvāṇa, it is the end of suffering and transmigration. It is described as Emancipation (*mokṣa*), Liberation (*vimukti*), Supramundane (*lokottara*), Incomparable (*anuttara*), Wonderful (*adbhuta*), Invisible (*anidarśana*), and Unthinkable (*acintya*). It is, therefore, quite wrong to say that Buddhism does not tell us the result of the destruction of the 'relative.'

The fact is that the Buddhist sources have consistently warned us against any misconceptions about Nirvāṇa. And all conceptions about Nirvāṇa are, in fact, misconceptions. The Buddhist tradition has not taught that the self of each one of us is essentially identical with the Great Self (*paramātman*); instead of magnifying and glorifying the self (*ātman*), it has taught the utter extinction of the very idea of the self. In the Advaita Vedānta view, liberation consists in realizing and recovering the lost identity of the self with the Ultimate Reality (Brahman); in the Buddhist view, liberation consists in realizing the

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[1] English trans. by F.L. Woodword, *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, pt. II, p. 98; Rune E.A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, London, 1969, pp. 51 ff., has misunderstood these passages of the *Udāna*.

[2] *Dhammapada*, verses 202-04.

१- सर्वंकर

unreality of the self and in eradicating every trace of individuality. The formidable gulf between the Brahmanical *ātmavāda* and the Buddhist *anātmavāda*, between the Upaniṣads and the Tripiṭakas, is very clear indeed. It is because of this chasm that 'we Hindus', says Vivekananda, 'have never understood' the doctrines of Buddhism.

२ दरार
अंतर

It is the demand of a very naïve kind of people that Nirvāṇa should be either death or life. They are unable to understand the Middle Doctrine of Buddhism. We cannot improve upon what Edwin Arnold has said about such people's attitude:

३ · सरल

> If any teach NIRVĀNA is to cease,
> Say unto such they lie,
> If any teach NIRVĀNA is to live,
> Say unto such they err.[1]

The Swami says at one place that 'the modern Buddhists believe in God and the soul.'[2] He does not elaborate or illustrate this statement. I think that even the Buddhists of the Far East will look askance at this statement.

The Swami's treatment of the Buddhist notion of Nirvāṇa is clear-worded and deserves careful consideration. The Buddhists, says he, 'believe in the state called Nirvāṇa which is beyond this relative world. It is exactly the same as the Brahman of the Vedāntins, and the whole system of the Buddhists is founded upon the idea of regaining that lost state of Nirvāṇa.'[3] Whether Nirvāṇa is identical with Brahman is a matter of controversy. My own view is that we mortals living in *samsāra* cannot make a categorical statement about such a profound subject as the nature of Nirvāṇa and its exact parallels.

Several modern writers have treated Buddhism as a monastic system. Vivekananda occasionally subscribes to this practice. He says that 'the Buddhist command could only be carried out through monasticism . . . . Buddhism became the religion of a monastic order.'[4] This is far from truth; even the Theravāda form of Buddhism which has always emphasized monastic life and regarded monks as superior to laity, cannot be called 'the religion of a monastic order.' The word saṃgha should be understood to mean the entire community of those who take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha Buddhist laymen and laywomen are as much members of the saṃgha as the monks and the nuns. The ascetic rules and moral precepts

४ · भिक्षु
संघ

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[1] *The Light of Asia*, Boston, 1911, p. 231. [2] *Complete Works*, V, p. 97.
[3] ibid, II, pp. 194-95. [4] ibid, VIII, pp. 273-74.

7 · तपस्वी, योगी ·
5 · भिक्षुधर्मसंबंधी
वैराग्यसंबंधी, वैराग्यवाद
6 · जनसाधारण
8 · उपदेश, सिद्धा

prescribed for monks and nuns are more elaborate and demanding than those prescribed for laymen and laywomen. The ascetic or monastic members strive for the goal of Arhatship or spiritual perfection. The lay members of the samgha practise moral virtues and meditation and perform their normal social duties with a view to attaining good rebirth (*sugati*) and heaven. The monastic community depends on the laity for its daily necessaries while the householder Buddhists depend on monks for religious education and guidance. The Buddhist religion in practice is thus a common concern of both the monks and the laity. In the scriptures and authentic sacred texts also we find this comprehensive[2] form of religion which takes care of all the four classes of the Buddhist following, to wit, monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.[1]

विस्तृत, र्व- ाग्य.

Vivekananda attributes to the Buddha the saying, 'love God and strive to be perfect,' and says that 'in later years these doctrines of Buddha were forgotten.' This radical conclusion springs from the peculiar Brahmanical attempt to bridge the differences between the teachings of Śākyamuni and those of the Upaniṣads. 'The original Buddhism was not at all nihilistic'.[2] Later Buddhism, according to the Swami, developed nihilism by deviating from original Buddhism and as a result of extra-Indian influence. 'Thus the Nihilists arose, a sect whose doctrine it was that the whole universe, God and soul, had no basis, but that everything is continually changing. They believed in nothing but the enjoyment of the moment, which eventually resulted in the most revolting orgies[3]. That, however, is not the doctrine of Buddha, but a horrible degeneration of it, and honour to the Hindoo nation, who stood up and drove it out.'[3]

त्रिक- जा.

This statement is striking for its sheer confusion of Buddhist history and doctrines; in addition to confusion, it also reflects factual errors. In the first place, no sect or school of Buddhism is nihilistic. The Buddhists in India, from the Buddha down to Jñānaśrīmitra (11th century AD) have continuously and consistently opposed and rejected nihilism. It is the non-Buddhists like Śaṃkara who have wrongly styled the Mādhyamikas as nihilists. But the Mādhyamikas themselves declare that the Ultimate Reality (*tattva*) is beyond being and non-being, beyond persistence[4] and annihilation[5]. The assumption[6] that the

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✓ [1] See L.M. Joshi, 'Social Perspective of Buddhist Soteriology' in *Religion and Society*, VIII, no. 3, Bangalore, 1971.

[2] *Complete Works*, II, p. 509. [3] ibid.

4. अध्यवसाय, दृढ़ग्राह
5. आत्मा तथा शरीर का नाश
6. कल्पना

'nihilistic' sect arose as a result of foreign impact is entirely groundless. Those who maintain that the notions of God and soul are mere notions without any intelligible basis, are not necessarily nihilists. The tenet of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is one of the basic doctrines of early Buddhism. The word *śūnyatā* is a master symbol of Ultimate Reality which is beyond all conceptions.

It is true that the doctrine of change is a fundamental Buddhist doctrine. But it is entirely wrong to say that its upholders believed in 'the enjoyment of the moment.' Buddhism is not a kind of Epicure2anism or hedonism that its followers could be described as believers in 'the enjoyment of the moment.' Vivekananda is possibly referring to certain aspects of Tāntrika Buddhism when he brings in the idea of 'enjoyment.' But then he is confusing the history of the doctrines of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), impermanence (*anityatā*) and 'Great Delight' (*mahāsukha*). This brings us to a review of his views about the origin of Tāntrika Buddhism and its consequences.

२.तृप्तिवाद
सुखवा

BUDDHISM AND THE TANTRA

One of the favourite theories current among a few Brahmanical writers is that the Buddhists were responsible for introducing Tāntrika practices and for degenerating them into moral 'corruptions', sexual 'orgies' and 'diabo3lical rites.' The Tāntrika sculptures on medieval Brahmanical temples of India are also attributed to the influence of the Buddhists. Swami Vivekananda seems to have been one of the influential teachers of these views. He says:

-क्रूर

'It is my belief that the Tantras, in vogue amongst us, were the creation of the Buddhists themselves. Those Tāntrika rites are even more dreadful than our doctrine of Vāmāchāra, for in them adultery4 got a free rein, and it was only when the Buddhists became demoralised through immorality that, they were driven away by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.'[1] Elsewhere the credit of driving out the Buddhists from India is given to Śaṃkara and the origins of Tāntrika practices are traced to foreign races who had embraced Buddhism. It is alleged that Buddhism created a 'medl5ey of Āryans, Mongols, and aborigines' and this led to 'some of the hide6ous Vāmāchāras.' 'This travesty7 of the teaching of the Great Master had to be driven out of India by Shri Shankara and his band of Sannyāsins.'[2] At another place we are told that the Indian Buddhists imitated the 'Tibetan and other barbarous

4 व्यभि

5 मिश्रण

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[1] *Complete Works*, VI, pp. 224-25.
[2] ibid, IV, p. 326.

6. भयंकर

7 नकल, बदला हुआ वेष.

customs in the name of religion.' 'They went to preach in those places and assimilated their corruption, and then introduced them into India.'[1]

It was a result of these 'varieties of superstition and hideous worship' that came to India through Buddhist converts that 'the whole of India became one degraded mass of superstition.'[2] Vivekananda ृणाजनक says that 'the abominable figures carved on the temple-walls' at Jagannātha or Puri are due to the Buddhist Tāntrikism. 'One of the principal centres of Buddhism was Jagannātha or Puri.'[3] At another place he says that 'the temple of Jagannātha is an old Buddhist temple. We took this and others over and re-Hinduised them. We shall have to do many things like that yet.'[4] The work of Śaṃkara, Kumārila, and Rāmānuja, the 're-conquest' of the whole of India by the 'Vedantic religion', is thus still unfinished.

Later Buddhism has come to mean 'degradation,' it resulted 2 in the 2. degradation of India; Tāntrikism 'ruined Buddhism' and polluted the दूषित- blessed 'Hinduism.' 'I am perfectly convinced,' says Vivekananda, किया 'what they call modern Hinduism with all its ugliness is only 3 stranded Buddhism. Let the Hindus understand this clearly, then it would निःसहाय be easier for them to reject it without murmur. As for the ancient form which the Buddha preached, I have the greatest respect for it, as well as His person. . . . Neither is the Buddhism of Ceylon any good . . . The real Buddhism, I once thought, would do much good. But I have given up the idea entirely, and I clearly see the reason why Buddhism was driven out of India, and we will be too glad if the Ceylonese carry off the remnant of this religion with its hideous idols and 4 licentious rites.'[5] 4. लंपट पातकी

The 'ancient form' of Buddhism according to this theory, lay in 'the fulfilment of Hinduism,' and 'the real Buddhism' in the maxim 'love God and strive to be perfect.' The Buddhists, the followers of Buddhism, having failed to understand this real meaning of the Buddha's message, committed errors and imported Tāntrika rites and 'hideous' practices from abroad and ruined religious life!

We must quote one more passage in order to complete our picture of the Vivekananda version of later Buddhism. The passage we have selected for reproducing below is indeed remarkable, for it embodies a full-throated Brahmanical outburst against the Buddhist religion, and has been quoted approvingly by the greatest scholar of Brahmanism twentieth century has produced, P.V. Kane. This scholar says: 'In these days it has become a fashion to praise Buddha and his doctrines to the skies,' and then adds that 'as a counterblast to what modern encomiasts often say about Buddhism the present author will quote a strongly-worded (but not unjust) passage from Swami Vivekananda's lecture.'[1] Kane then quotes the passage from the Swami's lecture which is as follows: 1 - विरोध में तिरस्कारपूर्ण घोषण

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[1] *Complete Works*, V, p. 317.
[2] ibid, III, p. 263.
[3] ibid, VII, p. 119.
[4] ibid, III, p. 264.
[5] ibid, VIII, p. 502.

'The earlier Buddhists in their rage against the killing of animals had denounced the sacrifices of the Vedas; and these sacrifices used to be held in every house. There was a fire burning and that was all the paraphernalia of worship. These sacrifices were obliterated, and in their place came gorgeous temples, gorgeous ceremonies, and gorgeous priests, and all that you see in India in modern times. I smile when I read books written by some modern people who ought to have known better, that the Buddha was the destroyer of Brahmanical idolatry. Little do they know that Buddhism created Brahmanism and idolatry in India . . . Thus, in spite of the preaching of mercy to animals, in spite of the sublime ethical religion, in spite of the hair-splitting discussion about the existence and non-existence of a permanent soul, the whole building of Buddhism tumbled down piecemeal; and the ruin was simply hideous. I have neither the time nor the inclination to describe to you the hideousness that came in the wake of Buddhism. The most hideous ceremonies, the most horrible, the most obscene books that human hands ever wrote or the human brain ever conceived, the most bestial forms that ever passed under the name of religion, have all been the creation of degraded Buddhism.'[2]

ाभूषण

3 नष्ट किया हुआ.

कुत्सित 4 अशुभ 5. [illegible], अशिष्ट.

It will perhaps be hard to find a parallel to these 'strongly-worded' statements even in anti-Buddhist writings. When I first read these views of Vivekananda in 1964 in P.V. Kane's *History of Dharamśāstra*, I was shocked and wrote a critical review of his thesis. Luckily I withheld the publication of that review, in spite of J. Duncan M. Derett's advice that the 'striking passages on Buddhism which, since they come from so learned and accurate a pen, must be taken into account by the historian of religion in India.'[3] It may be mentioned here that a revised and milder criticism (milder than planned earlier) of the views of Vivekananda and Kane has been published by me elsewhere.[1] After many years, when I am dealing with the same scurrilous passages, I do not feel any shock or surprise. During the last several years spent in the study of the history of religions in India I have realized that much of the hostile criticism of Buddhism by modern Hindu writers is based partly on a misreading or misunderstanding of India's past history, and partly on traditional Brahmanical *odium* for a non-Brahmanical tradition.

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[1] P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, V, part 2, 1962, pp. 1029-30; cf. L. M. Joshi, *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, Kandy, 1970, pp. 11-12.

[2] *Complete Works*, III, pp. 263-65.

[3] J. Duncan M. Derett, review of P.V. Kane's *History of Dharmaśāstra*, V,

श्लील

ृणा

It is easy to flog a dead horse. For centuries Buddhism had not existed as a living tradition in India, and it was quite convenient for the nineteenth century pioneers of 'Hindu Renaissance' to attack Buddhism right and left. As we have suggested earlier[2] Vivekananda is the accepted teacher of almost all the twentieth century Brahmanical Hindu scholars and intellectuals. No wonder that even 'learned and accurate' Indian scholars feel inclined to quote Swami Vivekananda. He is quoted often in order to sustain a prejudice.

सहारा देना.

The purpose of the present book is to contribute a little bit to a historical study of Buddhism in relation to Brahmanical Hinduism and also to the study of interreligious understanding. This twofold purpose, especially its second part, sets a limitation which prevents us from going into a detailed examination of and giving polemical reply to the allegations made against Buddhism and the Buddhists. It will defeat our purpose if we attempted to give a picture of the dark side of Brahmanism in Vedic and Puranic ages.

4. विवादीय

But we cannot conclude this chapter without stating here, in the briefest possible form, the origin of Tāntrika doctrines and practices and their impact on Neo-Brahmanism of Hinduism. All available evidence, literary as well as archaeological, proves beyond doubt that Tāntrikism flourished in the Brahmanical Hindu circles far more vigorously than in the Buddhist circles. It is in Brahmanism that one will find the origin and flowering of the Tantras.

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part 2, in *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXVII, 2, p. 461.

[1] *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, Delhi, 1967; *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, Kandy, 1970; *Aspects of Buddhism in Indian History*, Kandy, 1973.

[2] Chapter I.

एकसाथ काम करने वाला.

ESSENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF TANTRA

The essence of Tāntrika culture is Śakti worship. The importance of female coefficient, a form of psychophysical culture (usually the *haṭhayoga*), use of *mantras* (spells and charms), *yantras* or 'diagrams,' *maṇḍalas* or 'circles,' rituals of propitiation and worship (*sādhana*, *pūjā*), and a non-dualistic metaphysic which symbolically suggests that the Highest is to be found in the unity of the male and the female aspects of life, these are the basic elements of Tāntrika religion and philosophy. The Tantra is a system of religious *sādhanā* and religious *siddhi* or perfection. Its doctrines can be grasped only in an operational manner. ~~Its path is an~~ esoteric one, to be practised by the initiates. The Tāntrika texts use a kind of 'special,' 'esoteric' or 'cryptic' language called *saṃdhābhāṣā*. It is to be understood symbolically rather than literally. According to high authorities like Pt. Gopinatha Kaviraja, Lama Anagarika Govinda, and Giuseppe Tucci, the Tantras represent a new form of spiritual mysticism of a high order. In view of this subtle and difficult nature of Tāntrika religion, it is not proper to condemn its doctrines as 'hideous,' 'bestial,' and 'immoral.'[1]

उ. गूढ़, रहस्यमय. गुह्य.

It is incorrect to say that the Tantra is of extra-Indian origin. It is also incorrect to say that the Tantras had their origins in Buddhist circles. Finally it is equally incorrect to say that the Tāntrika (or 'abominable') sculptures on medieval 'Hindu' temples are the creations of the Buddhists. Let us briefly elaborate these three points.

The close relation of the Tantras with the cults of Śakti or Mother Goddess and Śiva is well known. The pre-Vedic origins of some aspects of Śāktism, Śaivism and Tāntrikism are clearly suggested by some Harappan antiquities.[2] A number of elements of Tāntrikism, such as *mantras*, magic, and rituals of sacrifice (*homa*) and initiation (*dīkṣā*) can be traced to the Vedic literature and religion.[1] The old Upaniṣads contain a number of ideas, myths and symbols which recur in the Tantras. These ideas include references to sexual intercourse (*maithuna*). The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[2] teaches that all actions of a man, who sacrifices the self into the self, become spiritualized including eating, laughing and *maithuna*. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*[3] introduces sexual symbolism when it describes the 'male fire' and the 'female fire' and their union. This symbolism occurs in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[4] also. A well known passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.[5] describes the joyful condition of the union of the individual self with the universal self and compares it with the state of a man embraced by his wife. 'The passage hardly admits of translation and is in agreement with the language of the Tantras.'[6] The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*[7] contains many Tāntrika features. Thus we see that several basic elements of Tāntrikism are traceable to the Harappan culture, and especially the ritual, magical and sexual aspects of it can be traced to the religion of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads.

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[1] For the history and doctrines of Tantra, see my *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, chs. X-XI, pp. 302-78; S.B. Dasgupta, *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism*, 2nd edn., Calcutta, 1958; D.L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra*, part I, London, 1959; Lama Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, New York, 1969; Giuseppe Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Maṇḍala*, London, 1969; Gopinatha Kaviraja, *Bhāratiya Sanskriti Aur Sādhanā*, Hindi, part I, Patna, 1963, chs. 2, 10, 17, 37-38; Herbert V. Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa*, Oxford, 1963; Ferdinand D. Lessing and Alex Wayman trans., *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, The Hague, 1968; John Blofeld, *The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet*, New York, 1970.

[2] See *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, pp. 304-05; John Marshall ed., *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, London, 1931, I, pp. 44-58.

The question as to who first published Tāntrika treatises, the Buddhist or the Brahmanical followers, is less important than the fact of the existence of Tāntrika tendencies in the Vedic ceremonialism. Certainly, there is nothing to prove that the Buddhists were the first to introduce the Tantras. On the other hand, there is some evidence to suggest that the Brahmanical authors were the first to introduce Tāntrika elements in their sacred and secular treatises. The sacred collections (*saṃhitās*) of a Vaiṣṇava sect, the Pāñcarātra, such as the *Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā* and the *Jayākhya-Saṃhitā*, contain some Tāntrika materials concerning the worship and rituals of Śakti cult. According to Schrader, the Pāñcarātra system is practically concerned with one force, the 'Śakti.'[8] The system is mentioned also in the *Mahābhārata*. The *Ahirbhudhnya-Saṃhitā* was written in the fourth century AD in Kashmir. This text mentions the *Sātvata* and the

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[1] *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, pp. 305-06; A.B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads*, I, pp. 61, 71, 184, 200, 260ff; II, pp. 379ff; D.D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*, Bombay, 1962, chs. II-III, pp. 42ff.

[2] III. 17.3. [3] VI. 2.12-13. [4] V. 7.1; V. 8.1-2. [5] IV. 3.21-22.

[6] *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, p. 307.

[7] I. 2-5; II. 12.

[8] O. Schrader, *Introduction to Pāñcarātra*, p. 31.

Jayākhya-Saṃhitās which must be still earlier. No Buddhist *sūtra* of such an early date is concerned with the worship of female deities. There is inscriptional evidence also to show that the worship of Śakti and the practice of Tāntrika rites were prevalent among the followers of Brahmanism in the fifth century AD. The very word 'Tantra' occurs in the Gangdhār Stone Inscription which records the erection of 'the very terrible abode of the Divine Mothers, full of Ḍākinīs' and the performance of 'Tāntrika rites of their religion.'[1] Propitiation of Ḍākinīs is a feature peculiar to Tāntrika rituals. Another Gupta epigraph, the Bihar Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta, also refers to the 'Divine Mothers' (*mātṛbhiśca*).[2] The Śākta Hindus, the worshippers of Durgā, who sacrificed human beings to their deity, are mentioned by Hsüan-Tsang. He himself narrowly escaped slaughter at their hands near Ayodhyā.[3]

Tāntrika doctrines and practices seem to have become widespread first among the Brahmanical religious sects such as the Śaiva, Śākta, Pāśupata, Vaikhānasa, Pāñcarātra and Kāpālika. In and after the sixth century AD a section of the Buddhists also seems to have been influenced by Brahmanical rituals of the Pauranic type. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpasūtra* is one of the first Buddhist texts containing ritual prescriptions of the Brahmanical type. But it does not contain the special doctrines and crucial rites associated with the Tantras. The two earliest Buddhist Tantras are the *Guhysamāja-tantra* and the *Hevajra-tantra*, published possibly in the seventh and eighth centuries AD.

The 'six cruel rites (*ṣaṭakarma*) are described and recommended in the following texts of Brahmanical Hinduism: *Tārābhakti-Sudhārṇava*,[4]

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[1] John F. Fleet ed. and trans. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III, Calcutta, 1888, p. 78.

[2] ibid, pp. 47-48.

[3] Samuel Beal trans., *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 86-88.

[4] See *Tantrik Texts*, XXI, ed. by Arthur Avalon and Pancanana Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1940, introduction, pp. 13-17, for references in this text to *pañcamakāras*, the five articles whose names start with the letter *ma*, viz., *madya* (wine), *māṃsa* (flesh), *matsya* (fish), *mudrā* (parched grain) and *maithura* (sexual intercourse), and to *kumārī-pūjā*, worship of a virgin. The so-called 'hideous rites' and 'bestial forms' of religion may be seen also in the following two Brahmanical Tantras: *Merutantra*, ed. by Raghunatha Sastri, Bombay, ch. X, verses 400-01, 425-26, 529, pp. 190, 209; *Kulacūḍāmaṇinigama*, ed. by Arthur Avalon, Madras, 1956, ch. IV, verse 14. The 'six cruel rites' are *śānti-karma*, *vaśyakarma*, *stambhana*, *dveṣaṇa*, *uccāṭana* and *māraṇa*. The meaning of these words is: rites for

Agni-Purāṇa,[1] *Prapañcasāra* attributed to Śaṃkarācārya,[2] *Jayākhya Saṃhitā*,[3] *Śakti-Saṃgama-tantra*[4] and *Śāradātilaka*.[5] For some more references to these and allied topics of Tantra, the reader may see P.V. Kane's *History of Dharmaśāstra*.[6] According to Kane, the so-called 'evil rites' or 'cruel rites' developed from *Śyena-yāga* of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Śrautasūtras* of the later Vedic age.[7] It should be mentioned in passing that even the *Matsya-Purāṇa*,[8] one of the early Purāṇas, deals with some of these evil rites. No scholar can say that the above Brahmanical texts were the creations of 'degraded Buddhism.' Our suggestion is that Tāntrikism, and its 'abominable' features have always been a part of Vedic-Brahmanic tradition. घृणाजन

It is true that much of the sculptural wealth of early medieval Indian temples depicts Tāntrika motifs of sexo-yogic lore.[9] But are these temples Buddhistic? The temples at Puri, Bhuvanesvara, Koṇārk and Khajurāho, which have these so-called 'hideous idols' and 'abominable figures,' belong to 'Hinduism' and not to 'degraded Buddhism.' No one can deny the fact that the Buddhists wrote the Tantras and there are many examples of Buddhist sculpture showing mythical figures of *mithuna* (not *maithuna*) and of the sexo-yogic posture called *yuganaddha*, 'two-in-one' (Tibetan *yab-yum*). These pieces can be seen not on the walls of the Hindu temples but in different museums.

When we see that the Tāntrika rites developed from Vedic *karmakāṇḍa* or sacrificial ritualism, when we see that the Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas and Śāktas were the first to propagate the Tāntrika religion, when we see that the Tantras became widespread not only among the Buddhists but especially among the Hindus also, how can we say that

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the pacification of disease etc; bewitching men and women; stopping the movements or actions of others; creating hatred or enmity between friends; making a person flee from the country; and killing, respectively.

[1] ch. 138.

[2] ch. XXIII, verse 5.

[3] ch. XXVI, verse 24.

[4] ch. VIII, verses, 102-05.

[5] ch. IX, verse 103-04.

[6] V, part 2, pp. 1074 ff.

[7] P.V. Kane, op. cit., V, part 2, p. 1114.

[8] ch. 93, verses 149-155.

[9] This is too well known a fact. See Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, 2nd edn., London, 1959; Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, London, 1933; *Pala and Sena Sculpture*, Calcutta, 1929.

the so-called degradation associated with Tāntrikism was due to the Buddhists only? Finally, it may be mentioned that Tāntrika rites and practices went to Tibet from India, especially from Bengal, the home of Swami Vivekananda. The foreign elements in Tantra are of a very late date and insignificant.[1]

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[1] See P.C. Bagchi, 'Foreign Elements in the Tantra', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, VII, 1931; ibid, *Studies in the Tantras*, part I, Calcutta, 1939; Chintaharan Chakravarty, *The Tantras: Studies in their Origin and Literature*, Calcutta, 1963.

CHAPTER V

God's Alternative in Buddhism-I

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PROLEGOMENA प्रस्तावना

We now come to the most important and the most difficult subject of this book: God's alternative in Buddhism.[1]

In the history of Buddhism we find sects and schools holding some very diverse, sometimes almost diametrically opposed, doctrines. Even a casual student of the Buddhist Tradition will find the differences that exist among the texts and doctrines of Sthaviravāda, Vijñānavāda, Madhyamaka, and the Amitābha system, to mention only a few of the most important branches of the Tradition. As we have pointed out above (chapter I), the only valid and generally acceptable approach to Buddhism is the historical one which studies it in an integral and comprehensive manner.

In other words, our perspective of the Buddhist alternative of God will have to be based upon the authorities of as many Buddhist schools as possible within the space available here. Our main authorities here comprise the Pali and Sanskrit texts. While the Pali texts present us with the Sthaviravāda (Theravāda) perspective only, those in Sanskrit, as far as they are available, have preserved (in many cases incompletely, though) the perspectives of the Mahāsāṃghikas, the Sarvāstivādins, the Mādhyamikas, the Vijñānavādins (Yogācārins), the Buddhist Logicians (*nyāyavādino bauddhāḥ*), and the Vajrayānists. In addition, the evidence available in Buddhist epigraphs, architecture, sculpture and painting can (and should) be used, to my mind, as though it constituted a concrete commentary on ancient Buddhist ideas, ideals, beliefs, and myths. The historian of Buddhist religiousness has to take note of all those concrete expressions of it that constitute the elements of Buddhist culture.

The subject-matter of this chapter was, at first, planned as a discussion of what may be called Buddhology. By this word I mean a scientific or systematic study of the ideas, beliefs, and myths concerning Buddhahood. The discipline of Buddhology is comparable, in several respects, to the disciplines of Christology and Theology. Subsequently, however, when Buddhological materials had accumulated, it was decided, in view of the vastness and complexity of the materials, to postpone a comprehensive treatment of Buddhology for a subsequent volume.

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[1] This phrase, which at one time formed the title of manuscript of the present book, was suggested to me by the late Claude Alan Stark in 1973.

२ अध्यात्म-विद्या; वेदान्त,

1 ईसा के व्यक्तित्व व स्वभाव का अध्ययन [illegible]

Although Buddhology is comparable to Theology, it will not be justifiable to use the word 'Buddhist Theology' or a 'theology of Buddhahood' even if the word *theologia* be understood in the sense in which it was used by Plato and Aristotle. The word theology has acquired a thoroughly Christian connotation in all modern writings and its use in the study of Buddhist numinous ideas is likely to lead to misunderstanding.

3 गौण अर्थ में प्रकट

4 दैवत्व-संबंधी

The non-theistic character of the Buddhist religion is a settled fact. Buddhism is an alternative to ~~theism~~. In view of the non-theistic character of the Buddhist religion, and in view of the Buddhist criticism of the doctrine of God as creator and governor of the universe, we will have to consider, in this chapter however briefly, the meaning of God in theistic religions and the attitude of the Buddhist tradition to gods and God. In the next chapter we will discuss the powers, virtues, perfections, epithets and attributes of the Buddha or Tathāgata and see how the Buddhist religiousness has found an alternative of God-creator in that Reality which ~~transcends~~ all our thought-constructs and modes of speech.

5 आस्तिकवाद

GOD AND BUDDHISM

The views of Vivekananda are representative of the opinion of the educated Hindus of modern times. Another thing worthy of remark here is the Vivekanandian (in fact, Hinduistic) theory of a universalistic, unifying, and all-inclusive religion.

According to Vivekananda, although the Buddhists like the Jainas 'do not depend upon God', their religion, like all the other religions, seeks to evolve a 'God out of man'.[1] The Buddha, he tells us, rejected a Personal God, but his disciples 'manufactured a Personal God out of him'.[2] Being a follower of the Advaita Vedānta, the Swami says elsewhere that the idea of Personal God is insufficient, we must seek a higher ideal, the Impersonal Idea.[1] It is perhaps from this higher standpoint of the Absolute that he declares that 'all the beliefs in God and heaven are little beliefs of organized religions. Any scientific religion never proposes such things'.[2] It is legitimate to infer that the only 'scientific religion' in Vivekananda's theory is the Vedāntic religion. And let us remind the reader that, the Buddha was, according to him a real Vedāntin and the greatest teacher of the Vedānta.

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[1] *Complete Works*, I. 19. [2] ibid, III. 257.

In Vedāntic Hinduism, God is conceived both as an Absolute without attributes (*nirguṇa-brahman*) and as a Person (*puruṣa*) or Lord (*īśvara*) with all the attributes (*saguṇa-brahman*). The best document of this complex theology is the *Bhagavadgītā*. In the *Works* of Vivekananda we find that the foundation of Buddhist religion and philosophy is interpreted in terms of this complex theology. The Buddhahood or Nirvāṇa, we are told, is identical with Brahman; the *Bhagavadgītā*[3] uses the compound *brahma-nirvāṇa*, and the Buddha Śākyamuni should be (has been) viewed as an Avatāra of the Excellent Person (*puruṣottama*) i.e. of Viṣṇu or Īśvara.

While the ancient and medieval Hindu Purāṇas counted among the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu heroes, sages, and teachers only of Indian history and mythology, the modern Hindus, especially Vivekananda and his followers, extend this doctrine of *avatāras* to prophets of non-Indian religions also. Thus not only the Tathāgata is an *avatāra* but Jesus Christ is also an *avatāra* of God (Viṣṇu).

The *Bhagavadgītā*, contains the following declaration :

Whatever being shows supernal-manifestations,
Or majesty or vigor,
Be thou assured that that in every case
Is sprung from a fraction of My glory.[4]

Any majestic or glorious being (*vibhūtimatsattva*) appearing in India, Iran or Palestine is an expression of God's light (*tejas*).

The three classical verses (expounding the notion of God's descent, *avatāra*, in the world from time to time) of this text[5] constitute the foundation of the Brahmanical philosophy of assimilation and Hindu enthusiasm for syncreticism. Of all the attitudes toward Buddhism shown by non-Buddhists, the present writer has found the Hindu's most complex. It is anything but uniform or systematic; it is a mélange of hostile, friendly, sectarian, patronizing, devout and dogmatic attitudes. Traces of all these varieties of attitude can be found in Vivekananda; but his dominant attitude to the Buddha is of the finest order; it is sincere, sublime and devout.

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[1] *Complete Works*, II. 33. [2] ibid, VII, p. 431.
[3] II. 72; V. 24-26.
[4] *Bhagavadgītā*, X. 41, trans. by F. Edgerton, p. 54.
[5] *Bhagavadgītā*, IV, 6-8.

Although the *avatāra* value of the Buddha was seriously undermined by a section of the orthodox brāhmaṇas of ancient and medieval India by inventing the fable of 'Mahāmoha' or 'Māyāmoha[1];' the attitude of Vivekananda is based partly on the doctrine of *avatāra.* He does not, however, regard the Buddha as Mahāmoha or Māyāmoha; the Buddha, for him, was a perfect manifestation of God.

Thus referring to the *Bhagavadgītā*,[2] he says that 'A Hindu devotee would say: It is God himself who became Christ, and Krishna, and Buddha and all these great teachers.'[3] He believes that the 'Buddha saw God' just as Jesus saw God; just as Christ was a manifestation of God, 'so was Buddha.'[4] The dogma of the unity of all religions, so characteristic of the modern Hindu attitude, is repeatedly stated. 'The cosmic intelligence is what people call Lord, or God, or Christ, or Buddha, or Brahma.' Elsewhere we are told that Śiva, Viṣṇu, Buddha, Jina, Jehovah, Allah, and Brahma are the same.[5] These views are grounded in his approach to the phenomenon of religious plurality; they find their climax in the following most remarkable confession: 'The Lord Buddha is my Ishta—my God. He preached no theory about Godhead—he was himself God, I fully believe it.'[6]

[1] This word is used as a proper name for the Buddha-Avatāra. It means 'Delusive-Delusion' or 'Great Delusion' i.e. a false appearance; God (Viṣṇu) assumed an illusory form as Gautama Buddha with a view to deceiving or misleading the demons (*asuras*) in the 'dark age.' The *kaliyuga* or 'dark age' is an age when non-Vedic religions flourish, Vedic sacrifices decline, brāhmaṇas no longer enjoy supreme power and prestige, and even *śūdras* become ascetics and teachers. A good description of *kali-dharma* will be found in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* (ch. VII) of Tulasīdāss (16th century AD). For the story of Mahāmoha see the *Vishnu-Purāṇa*, English trans. by H.H. Wilson, Calcutta, 1961, pp. 269-70.

[2] IV. 7-8.

[3] *Complete Works*, I, p. 444.

[4] ibid, II, p. 473; IV, p. 31.

[5] ibid, II, p. 231; III, p. 154; see also VIII, pp. 179-80.

[6] ibid, VI, p. 227.

This then is the Hindu view of the Buddha. It would be interesting and instructive to ascertain the reactions of a Theravādin Buddhist, especially from Sri Lanka, to this view of the Buddha. Wilfred Cantwell Smith perhaps has Theravādin Buddhists in mind when he says that 'To them, "God" is too limited, too demeaning a concept to apply to their ultimates.'[1] Smith's estimate of the (Theravādin) Buddhist attitude to God as an ultimate divine category may be supported by the opinion of Walpola Rahula. One of the learned Theravādin Buddhist monks of modern Sri Lanka, Rahula has approached the twin doctrines of God and self in the folllowing manner:

'Two ideas are psychologically deep-rooted in man: ~~Self-protection and self-preservation~~. For self-protection man has created God, on whom he depends for his own protection, safety and security, just as a child depends on its parent. For self-preservation man has con~~ceived the idea of an immortal Soul or *Ātman*~~, which will live eternally. In his ignorance, weakness, fear, and desire, man needs these two things to console himself. Hence he clings to them deeply and fanatically . . . According to Buddhism, our ideas of God and Soul are false and empty.'[2]

Swami Vivekananda does not rest content with presenting the Vedāntic and Vaiṣṇavaite attitudes to the Buddha. He also makes a few Buddhological statements which can be appreciated apart from his traditional theories. Thus he says that Buddhahood is the state of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky, and that 'Buddhahood is an achievement, not a person.'[3]

He knows that the Buddhists have denied the Vedic gods; he also knows that the Buddha's position is superior to that of gods. 'The state of being a Buddha is superior to heavenly positions of many a Brahma or an Indra, who vie with each other in offering their worship at the feet of the Buddha, the God-man.'[4] The Buddhists of all shades, I think, will say that this is a correct statement about the position of the Buddha with regard to the gods.

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[1] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, 'Religious Atheism? Early Buddhist and Recent American' in *Milla wa-Milla, The Australian Bulletin of Comparative Religion*, no. 6, Melbourne, 1966, p. 29 note.

[2] Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, New York, 1962, pp. 51-52.

[3] *Complete Works*, I, p. 303; IV, p. 136; VIII, p. 72.

[4] ibid, IV, p. 434.

In spite of the fact that he has many times referred to the Buddhists as 'atheists' and 'agnostics' and 'nihilists', the Swami repeatedly returns to his favourite theme of the unity and harmony of religions. He does not try to reconcile his contradictory statements. Thus while he recognizes the absence of God in Buddhism at one place, he hastens to equate Buddhahood and God at another place. The following passages will make this observation clear:

'In some religions God is not worshipped, nay, His existence is not believed in, but good and worthy men are worshipped as if they were Gods. The example worthy of citation in this case is Buddhism.'[1]

Then again, 'Buddha may or may not have believed in God, that does not matter to me. He reached the same state of perfection to which others come by *bhakti*—love of God, Yoga, or *jñāna*.'[2]

The difference in the meaning of these two statements is important; to say that the goal of Buddhist religiousness is the same as that of other great forms of religiousness is different from saying that the Buddhists worship 'good and worthy men,' while non-Buddhists worship God. It is not true to say that in Buddhism 'good and worthy men are worshipped as if they were Gods.' 'Good and worthy men' of the Buddhist tradition are perhaps the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Arhats; but they are neither men nor gods. The Buddhists also venerate a variety of gods (*devas*), as we shall see below, but they are inferior to the enlightened beings, and they are not on a par with God as conceived in Brahmanism, Christianity or Islam. Buddhist attitude to gods and demi-gods is well known; the problem before us is concerning the Buddhist attitude to God or Supreme Being such as is believed to have been revealed by Jesus Christ. This brings us to a consideration of the doctrine of God in theistic religious systems.

THE IDEA OF GOD

According to an English dictionary, the word God means in monotheistic religions, 'the creator and ruler of the universe, regarded as eternal, infinite, all-powerful, and all-knowing; Supreme Being; Almighty.'[3] It may be mentioned in passing that although modern Hindus, Muslims and Christians have commonly used the word God in their writings in English, it is perhaps no more than a symbol, as Smith notes,[1] among many other symbols, referring to an Ultimate Reality. In all the theistic religious traditions of the world we find a variety of such names or words or symbols which refer to some thing real, often called God. The Brahmanical tradition has a list of one thousand names of God; numerous names and epithets of God and Christ are known to the Christian tradition, and Islamic tradition also has a famous list of ninety-nine names of God. A classical saying in the Buddhist tradition teaches that we should follow the meaning, not the mere words or symbols. Of course, meaning is garbed in words and cannot be expressed except by words or symbols. Therefore, we have to use the words even if only for the sake of expressing their meaning.

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 357.
[2] ibid, IV, p. 136.
[3] *Webster's New World Dictionary*, p. 599.

IN BRAHMANISM-HINDUISM

To figure out and formulate the idea of God in the Brahmanical tradition is very difficult. The Sanskrit word which comes closest to the word God or Deity is *deva*; it is used for any one of the numerous deities or gods as well as for the Supreme Being.

In the old Upaniṣads, we find that the Supreme Being is often called Brahman, Ātman, Deva, and Akṣara. One can translate these words as the Holy, the Self, God, and the Imperishable. It is important to remark that the Holy (Brahman) and the Self (Ātman) are *not always* identified in these texts; in other words, God and Self are at times carefully distinguished, a fact often overlooked by some modern exponents of the Vedānta.[2] But the dominant idea in the Brahmanical theologies is monotheistic; the Advaita Vedānta is both monistic as well as monotheistic because of its theories of Brahman and Īśvara held together. For the old Upaniṣads, the one ultimate principle, the ground of everything is Brahman, often also called Ātman. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*[3] teaches that Brahman is being or real (*sat*), thought or consciousness (*cit*) and infinite (*ananta*) or (according to another reading) perhaps more correctly ,bliss (*ānanda*). Eternity, infinity, bliss, knowledge, consciousness, luminosity, and indescribability of Brahman are repeatedly taught in the Upaniṣads. Some passages of these texts justify us in using the word Absolute for Brahman; thus we are told that It is without any causal connections, without any diversity, independent of becoming and not becoming, beyond good and evil, past and future; all attempts of defining It are wrong; this is the meaning of *neti neti*.[1]

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[1] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, op. cit., p. 29.

[2] See *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, IV. 6-7; *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, III. 1-2. This view may be further supported by the *Bhagavadgītā*, XV. 16-18.

[3] II. 1.

In majority of instances however, Brahman is personified; the self is within us, inner-guide, guardian, governor and lord of the worlds; He is the inspirer of good as well as evil deeds; the *ātman* is known by a man through His pleasure (*prasāda*); He is mighty (*prabhu*), good (*śiva*), possessed of mysterious power (*māyin*), lord of the people (*prajāpati*); this Deva or God becomes manifest to those who have loving devotion (*bhakti*) to Him and the *guru*.[2] The Brahmanical notion of God as Person, the theistic idea, first makes its appearance in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. १- उत्पत्ति

The idea of creation as an emanation from God is found in the old Upaniṣads though not in a systematic form. The Vedic hymns referring to certain aspects of creation from 'that one' (*tad ekaṃ*) or Prajāpati or Viśvakarman, or Brahmaṇaspati, or Puruṣa, or from Prāṇa (breath) or Vāc (speech) etc., are perhaps mere gropings of Ṛgvedic priests.[3] It is too much to find a theory of creation of the world in the old Vedic texts, although they do contain some seeds of later theory. A passage in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*[4] states that 'that, verily, whence beings here are born, that by which when born they live, that into which on deceasing they enter—that be desirous of understanding. That is Brahman.'[5] The cryptic word *tajjalan* occurs in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[6] which is interpreted by Śaṃkara in the sense that this universe arises from that Brahman, lives and moves in Brahman and disappears into that same Brahman. The

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[1] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III. 8; IV. 2.4; IV. 4 22 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. 1.3; *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. 14.18.

[2] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III. 7.3-23; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, IV. 15-2-4; *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad*, III. 8; *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. 23; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, III. 11-12; IV. 3, 10; VI. 23.

[3] See for example, *Ṛgveda*, X. 72, 81-82, 90, 121, 129. See also Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, Eng. trans. by A.S. Geden, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 181ff.

[4] III. 1.

[5] R.E. Hume's English trans., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, 2nd edn., Madras, 1949, p. 290.

[6] III. 14.1.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad[1] teaches that all beings and gods, all the elements, the whole universe, are produced from the Imperishable Person (*akṣara-puruṣa*). Brahman is the light of lights, reality of realities, greater than the greatest, smaller than the smallest, omnipresent, omniscient and, at the same time, transcendent.

A most important and influential text of Brahmanism-Hinduism is the famous *Bhagavadgītā*. It is the earliest Brahmanical text which deals in detail with the relation of God with man, other creatures, and the world. Although it follows the Upaniṣads, it presents ideas of very diverse origin and a complex theology. It is the document par excellence of theistic-Vaiṣṇavaite-Vedānta; it is the New Testament of modern Hindus. Although the doctrine of descent of the Bodhisattva had been taught already by Śākyamuni, it was left for the *Bhagavadgītā* to popularize this idea. God takes birth as man and lives on the earth. 'Even though I am unborn and inexhaustible in my essence, even though I am lord of all beings, still I take up control of my own nature, and am born by means of my delusive power.'[2] The God who assumes human forms (according to the Purāṇas, non-human forms also), is the source and end of everything. 'I am the producer and the destroyer of the whole universe. There is nothing else, O Dhanañjaya, higher than myself; all this is woven upon me, like numbers of pearls upon a thread.'[3] Furthermore, in two verses God is described as the father of this world, the mother, the creator, the grandsire, the object of knowledge, the sanctifier, the sacred syllable *om*, the Ṛk, the Sāman, the Yajus also; the goal, the supporter, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the origin, dissolution and the maintenance, the receptacle, and the eternal seed.[4] Such is the glory and power of Bhagavān. The unity of God and the living beings is declared thus : 'O Guḍākeśa (Arjuna), I am the *ātman* abiding in the heart of all beings, I am the beginning, the middle, and the end too of beings.'[5]

It is instructive to consider how some modern Hindus have viewed and understood the idea of God in their tradition.

Vivekananda says that 'our religion preaches an Impersonal-Personal God;[1] 'God is love personified.'[2] Mahatma Gandhi concluded his remarkable autobiography with the following words: 'My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth . . . To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself.'[3] We see that these pivotal figures of the Hindu tradition in modern age emphasized the practical moral values of faith in the Divine. Commenting on the *Bhagavadgītā* conception of God, Surendranath Dasgupta has made the following observation: 'God is not only immanent, but transcendent as well. The Immanent part, which forms the cosmic universe, is no illusion or *māyā*: it is an emanation, a development, from God. The good and the evil, the moral and the immoral of this world, are all from Him and in Him . . . The transcendent part . . . is itself the differenceless reality—the Brahman. But . . . God in His super-personality transcends even Brahman, in the sense that Brahman, however great it may be, is only a constitutive essence in the complex personality of God.'[4] This last statement is remarkable for the insight it brings into the relationship between Īśvara or God and Brahman or the Absolute.

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[1] II.1.1-10.

[2] *Bhagavadgītā*, IV. 6; English trans. by K.T. Telang in *SBE*, VIII, Delhi, 1965, pp. 58-59.

[3] ibid, VII. 7, p. 74. [4] *Bhagavadgītā*, IX. 17-18.

[5] ibid, X. 20. My translation.

According to Radhakrishnan 'Īśvara is all-comprehensive and contains within himself all that exists, potentially in *pralaya* and actually in creation . . . The whole phenomenal world is the appearance of Brahman. Brahman, on which all rests, becomes Īśvara, which includes all, when shaped by the phenomenal forms.'[5] In other words, as he says elsewhere, 'Brahman and Īśvare, Absolute and God, are not contradictory, but complementary to each other.'[6]

According to the Hindu authorities, the principle which makes for the phenomenal appearance of the world is *māyā.* Paul Deussen and A.S. Geden are not right in translating the word *māyā* as 'illusion' when this word occurs in the old Upaniṣads; similarly K.T. Telang is not right in interpreting this word as 'delusive power' of God when it occurs in the *Bhagavadgītā.* In the Upaniṣads and the *Bhaga-*

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 249. [2] ibid, III, p. 365.

[3] M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Eng. trans. by Mahadev Desai, sec. edn., Ahmedabad, 1940, pp. 370-71.

[4] Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1932, II, p. 524.

[5] S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, London, 1929, II, p. 554.

[6] Haridas, Bhattacharya, ed., *The Cultural Heritage of India*, 2nd edn., I, p. xxx,

vadgītā, as also in the *Ṛgveda*, *māyā* means magical or mysterious power of God or gods. It is only in the Mahāyāna Buddhism and in the Advaita Vedānta of Gauḍapāda and Śaṃkara that the word *māyā* is employed in the sense of 'illusion' or false appearance.

The dominant minority of intellectually oriented modern Hindus seems to have given an impression that the Advaita Vedānta represents the central position in Hindu religious thought. This, however, is a false impression; at no time in the religious history of India Advaita Vedānta may be said to have attained a position of general or universal or even considerable appeal to those who adhered to the Brahmanical tradition.

The present writer regards the Vedānta of Śaṃkara's school as contrary to the central philosophy of Brahmanism, as an external, Buddhistic, intrusion into Brahmanic fold. In other words, the Advaitic interpretation of Hindu theology—the doctrines of God, soul, and the world—does not represent the central philosophical position of the vast majority of Brahmanic Hindus. It is only a minor thought-current within Hinduism; the real faith and philosophy of the Brahmanic Hindus is to be found in the tradition represented by the *Bhagavadgītā* and by men like Rāmānuja, Tulasīdāsa, and Gandhi. Among the modern scholars, who present a balanced and comprehensive perspective of Vedic-Brahmanic-Hindu religious thought, the present writer counts the names of Surendranath Dasgupta, Pandurang Vaman Kane and Gopinatha Kaviraja. Kane's attitude to Śaṃkara's doctrine may be seen in the following words:

'How the finite world arises from the Infinite is a mystery, for which Śaṅkarācārya employs the word Māyā . . . The concept of Māyā as postulated by Śaṅkarācārya is one of the most misunderstood elements of Vedānta. Further, it should not be forgotten that a very large number of philosophically minded Hindus do not advocate the doctrine that the world is an illusion . . . There is the physical world with its manifold distinctions but it must rest on something else; that something is called the *absolute brahman*. The relation between the two is inexplicable and therefore it is spoken of as Māyā. In that way Śaṅkarācārya is agnostic.'[1]

It must be noted here that monotheism is the standard and universally accepted idea in Brahmanical religious history. W.C. Smith remarks somewhere that 'no statement about a religion is valid unless it can be acknowledged by that religion's believers.'[1] This, in our opinion, is a fundamental principle of guidance for those who study and express an opinion about the religious doctrines and practices of other men. We would, however, like to add to this remark that this principle of guidance need not apply to concrete historical facts, e.g., dates and historical origins of particular ideas, texts or doctrines. For instance, the meaning of the sanctity of a cow in modern Hinduism is best known to a cow-worshipping Hindu, but the antiquity of the tradition of the sanctity of a cow is better known to an historian of religious ideas of the Indian people, be he a Hindu or a non-Hindu, and its validity need not be dependent on a Hindu's approval.

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[1] P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, V, part 2, p. 1510.

To say that Brahmanism or Hinduism is polytheistic is therefore not right. Modern Hindus insist on the well-known Ṛgvedic[2] line for their theological opinion that Reality or God is only one in spite of the fact that people speak of it and worship it in many ways or forms. A Sanskrit verse of medieval origin, quoted in the *Subhāṣita-ratna-bhāṇḍāgāra*, sums up the common and catholic belief of Hindus in one God or Reality worshipped under diverse forms. It reads thus: 'May Hari, the master of the three worlds, grant you the desired reward, whom the Śaivas revere as Śiva, Vedāntins as Brahman, the Buddhists as Buddha, the Naiyāyikas, expert in epistemology, as the Creator (*kartā*), the followers of Jainism as Arhat, and the Mīmāṃsakas as Sacrifice (*karma*).'[3] The Hindu view of God is that He is the God of all. Recently Claude Alan Stark has studied this idea in the light of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, and the study is significantly entitled *God of All.*

IN JUDAISM

The Jewish tradition is well known for its stern monotheism. Abram or Abraham is believed to be a monotheist. According to Isidore Epstein, monotheistic beliefs existed in West Asia even before Abram. The God of Abram's conception was 'the Creator of Heaven and earth and all that is therein.' The Creator-God is conceived as an ethical God concerned with justice and righteousness.[1]

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[1] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, 'Comparative Religion: Whither and Why?' in *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, ed. by Mircea Eliade and J.M. Kitagawa, Chicago, 1959, p. 42.

[2] I. 164.46.

[3] *Subhāṣita-ratna-bhāṇḍāgāra*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 15 verse 27. My translation.

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' He 'created man in his own image.'[2] God is called Lord and is 'greater than all gods.' The unity of God is stressed and making of his images is prohibited in these words : 'I am the Lord your God . . . You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them, or serve them; for, I the Lord your God am a jealous God.'[3] Righteousness and justice are essential attributes of God. 'The Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.'[4] A passage states that God dwells 'in thick darkness,' (I *Kings*, 8.12) meaning possibly that God is invisible or incomprehensible. God, in Judaism, is personal, he is the father, men are his children, 'sons of the Lord.'[5]

To complete our brief notice of the idea of God in Judaism, we will cite the opinions of two or three noted Jewish scholars. According to Epstein, 'The universal character of divine righteousness implied a uniform relation of God to man, and man to man. This in turn inspired the idea of the unity of men, and any violation of that unity was an injury to divine righteousness.'[6] The picture of God that we find in the Book of Psalms is characteristic of Jewish theology. 'To the Psalmist, God is more than the Supreme Being, the Creator of infinite power, wisdom, and majesty, who maintains the world and orders its course. He is man's great and constant Companion, upholding and sustaining his spirit in its loneliness and isolation.'[7]

God is a loving father, full of kindness and forgiveness. He is merciful, redeemer, mighty, omnipresent, omniscient and immanent. By nature incorporeal, pure spirit, the Lord of thoughts, God is the Father in Heaven. The transcendence of God means that He is 'far off in Heaven.'[8]

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[1] Isidore Epstein, *Judaism*, Baltimore, 1959, p. 12.

[2] *Genesis*, 1.27. I have used *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version* in Cleveland and New York, 1962.

[3] *Exodus*, 20. 2-5. [4] *Isaiah*, 5.16. [5] *Deuteronomy*, 14.1.

[6] Isidore Epstein, op. cit., p. 57.

[7] ibid, p. 66. [8] ibid, pp. 136-37.

Leo Baeck says that 'The One God is the answer to all mystery; he is the source of all that is eternal and ethical, creative and ordered, hidden and definite. From this alliance between the secret and the commandment issues all existence and all significance. Thereby their unity is apprehended; commandment is linked to secret and secret to commandment. Goodness is of God and set by him before man who has the power to realize it. There is but one optimism, comprising all which rests upon the One God: ethical monotheism. It is therefore a necessary consequence of those religions which, like Buddhism, are consistently pessimistic that they are religions without God and that their ethical element is merely a contingent aspect of man's activity.'[1] Buddhism, of course, is not 'consistently pessimistic;' *nirvānam paramam sukham.* 'Nirvāṇa is the supreme bliss.' But let us, for the present moment, appreciate a Jewish conviction that 'ethical monotheism' is the one and only optimism. A Buddhist and a Hindu would say that Ethical Idealism is another form of optimism, the idea of Dharma or Mokṣa being the source of this optimistic striving.

It seems that God's immanence rather than transcendence is stressed in Judaism. 'For Judaism the kingdom of God is not a kingdom above the world or opposed to it or even side by side with it. Rather is it the answer to the world given by man's goal: the reconciliation of the world's finiteness with its infinity.'[2] A man enters the kingdom of God here and now by moral service of God.

It is to be noted that man holds a special position in Jewish theory of Divine creation; he is not a creature like other creatures because he has been created in the 'Image of God.' Werblowsky says that 'He is, in fact, a miniature God. Within his human limits he creates, like God. This is the true *imitatio Dei* or imitation of God.'[3] The idea of covenant is central to the Jewish understanding of the relationship between God, the human world, and the world of nature. 'Created existence is the condescension of the Almighty God that grants apparent independence and selfhood to his creatures to the extent of admitting them as his partners.'[4] The ancient Israelites viewed the Divine as an intensely Personal God; it was through the 'word,' his principal manifestation, that his devotees experienced his presence. The unity of Creator-God implies the divinity of man as well as the reality of the world.

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[1] Leo Baeck, *The Essence of Judaism*, New York, 1961, p. 84.

[2] ibid, p. 243.

[3] R.J. Zwi Werblowsky in *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths*, ed. by R.C. Zaehner, Boston, 1967, p. 29.

[4] Werblowsky, op. cit., p. 30.

IN CHRISTIANITY

Although Christianity inherited the 'ethical monotheism' of the prophets of Israel, the ethical principles of Christianity are derived from a distinct vision of God as Christ revealed Him to his followers. God is 'the Power,' 'the Blessed,' and 'the Father'; Jesus Christ is His son, the only Son, and hence called 'the Son of God.'[1] The idea of the descent of the Son of God in the form of the son of man is a fundamental element of Christian faith. The purpose behind this descent is the compassion or grace of God. Lord God, the Father, is the embodiment and ultimate source of compassion, love and forgiveness. The Christians see Him through the 'Word' which became incarnate in human form as Jesus Christ.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' The Word that was God was thus a living and luminous Person or Being. Out of supreme mercy for the sinful and suffering humanity, this 'Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth : we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father.'[2]

Jesus Christ is the 'Good Teacher', who brought the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven and enunciated the principles of good life or godly life. 'No one is good but God alone'[3] and men must imitate God.

As in the case of Hinduism there are many sects wherein diverse attempts are made to understand and interpret the reality of God, so also in the Christian Church several perspectives of God have been offered. In accordance with our method adopted above, we shall be guided by the opinions of the leading Christians themselves, in figuring out their conception of God. The Hindu idea of God

[1] *Matthew*, 26. 63-64; *Mark*, 14. 61-62.

[2] *John*, 1. 1-5, 14.

[3] *Luke*, 18. 18-19.

differs from the Christian idea. The notion of incarnation in Christianity, for instance, is not the same as that of *avatāra* in Vaiṣṇavism.[1]

Christ is viewed as much more than a soter or 'saviour.' It has been stressed that *Kyrios* (Lord) is 'the name above every name'; *Kyrios Jesus Christos*, therefore, has to be understood as more than a Messiah. Cullmann says that 'All functions of God were attributed to Jesus—even that of creation.'[2] All the epithets and attributes of God may thus belong to *Kyrios Christos*, even though Lord Christ is the Son of God. The mystery of Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Christ is expressed in the Scriptures in the following words: 'All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'[3] The relationship of Christ with God is thus unique; God is known through him : 'He who has seen me has seen the Father.'[4]

According to the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, God is 'the Supreme Being, Pure Act, First Cause of all, provident conserver and governor of the universe: the Absolute—infinite, eternal, immutable, intelligent, omniscient, all-powerful, and free; the Creator, to whom creatures owe homage, respect, and obedience; the Sovereign Good, diffusive of all goodness, toward which everything tends as to its ultimate final cause: the Supernatural source of revelation; the Godhead composed of three Divine Persons in one divine nature, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.'[5] This last statement dealing with the trinitarian theology need not engage our attention here; the impressive list of words or attributes reproduced above are sufficient to suggest what is meant by the word God.

As in Judaism so in Christianity, human beings have a privileged position in God's creation since 'they are capable of a filial relation to Him as the rest of the creation is not.'[1] God's 'purposes are characterized by loving kindness';[2] which, however, is bestowed especially on men. Men are capable of knowing God through the practice of loving kindness. Burtt even says that 'it is impossible to become one with God except through friendly oneness with others.'[3] The heart of Christian religiousness is thus becoming one with God through love; religion ends in God; God is the goal of religion.[4]

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[1] Cf. Geoffrey Parrinder, *Avatar and Incarnation*, London, 1970.

[2] Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, revised edn., trans. by S.C. Guthrie and C.A.M. Hall, Philadephia, 1963, p. 237.

[3] *Matthew*, 11. 27; *Luke*, 10.22.

[4] *John*, 14.9. Cp. The Buddhist passage: 'He who sees me sees the Dharma,' *Saṃyuttanikāya*, Nalanda, II, pp. 340-41; English trans. may be seen in the *Book of Kindred Sayings*, London, 1954, part III, p. 103.

[5] *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, I, p. 535, prepared and published by the Catholic University of America, New York, 1967.

Ninian Smart seems to make a distinction between God and Creator. He observes : 'To say that there is a God is therefore different from saying that there is a Creator or First Cause. God may be Creator : but primarily he is the object of worship.[5]

The question of a 'Proper Name' of God is stressed by some theologians. Thus Emil Brunner declares that 'the Name of God is only a "Proper Name" because it does not stand alongside of a general conception of an appellation. The plural "gods" is an insult to God; it belongs to the Nature of God that there should be "none other beside Him." Therefore He cannot be known through general conceptions, but only through the naming of His own Name. The truly personal God is He who is not known through thought, but through the manifestation of His Name, the God of revelation.'[6]

The present writer feels that more enlightened (by this he only means here those acquainted with non-Christian visions of God or Reality) Christian philosophers and historians of religion will not insist on a 'Proper Name' of God or on the vision of God based on a particular revelation only. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, for example, has made the following remarkable observation: *'The word "God" is a symbol; but that to which it refers, is a reality.* More accurately that to which those who have used this word have potentially referred, consciously or unconsciously, is real. *It is a reality about which none of us knows enough to be dogmatic or scurrilous;* yet about which each of us may, through his own symbols and his own faith, know enough to live and indeed, to live in a way that is transcendentally final.'[1] This means that what matters is the meaning, the intention, behind a word or name.

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[1] Edwin A. Burtt, *Man Seeks the Divine*, New York, 1957, p. 384.

[2] Gordon D. Kaufman, *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective*, New York, 1968, p. 88.

[3] Edwin A. Burtt, op. cit., p. 110. Cp. Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, New York, 1956, p. 62: 'Anything less than perfect love in human life is destructive of life . . . Egoism is always destructive.'

[4] See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, New York, 1964, p. 181, who says that religion comes to its end as soon as God is seen, and in fact 'when God appears before us in His depth and love and unrelenting truth all else dissolves.' Cp. the Buddhist parable in which religion (*dhaıma*) is compared to a raft which has to be discarded on reaching the Other Shore, i.e., Nirvāṇa. See the *Majjhimanikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, pp. 179-80; English trans. may be seen in the *Book of Middle Length Sayings*, London, 1967, I, p. 173.

[5] Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, New York, 1969, p. 17.

[6] Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, Dogmatics, I, trans. by Olive Wyon, London, 1949, p. 123.

The question of the existence of God has been debated and discussed most by the Christians themselves.[2] Rational philosophy may be said to have nearly shattered the course of Christian religiousness. Religious philosophers, however, have consistently appealed to God's transcendence. Paul Tillich, for example, thinks that His existence or non-existence cannot be discussed: "Thus the question of the existence of God can be neither asked nor answered. If asked, it is a question about that which by its very nature is above existence, and therefore the answer—whether negative or affirmative—implicitly denies the nature of God. It is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as it is to deny it. God is being—itself, not a being.'[3] One recalls the celebrated Mahāyāna notion of the impossibility of demonstrating the existence of *svabhāva*, 'one's own nature' or *svalakṣaṇa*, 'one's own mark,' or *aseitas*, 'aseity' or 'byitselfness.' From this standpoint the talk about the existence of God is as irrelevant as that about the death of God; for these words have no meaning for God.

Nevertheless, some of the Christians continue to deny and affirm the existence of God. In recent years a 'radical theology' of what is called 'the death of God' has been growing in some Christian circles. The phrase 'death of God' was perhaps first used by Nietzsche who did not claim to be a Christian, but our contemporary protagonists of the death of God theology claim to be Christians.[4] In some respects their ideas can be traced to those of Feuerbach, Kierkegaard, Karl Marx, and Bertrand Russell.[1] Gordon Kaufman has summed up the reasoning of these contemporary 'atheists' in the following words:

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[1] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, New York, 1967, p. 36. Italics added.

[2] See, for instance, *The Existence of God*, ed. by John Hick, New York, 1964, which briefly surveys the arguments from fourth century BC to twentieth century AD with an introduction by the editor.

[3] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Chicago, 1951, I, p. 237.

[4] William Hamilton, *The New Essence of Christianity*, New York, 1961; Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, Philadelphia, 1966.

'Here it may be argued that God the Creator—the foundation of this world in which we find ourselves—is evil, for in his universe power and destruction triumph, and love is crucified; at best he is morally and existentially irrelevant, being simply "omnipotent matter" (Bertrand Russell). But Jesus has shown what meaningful human life consists in. Man must live for and devote himself to love, self sacrifice, goodness—not cold impersonality. We should become followers of this Jesus who showed men how to live, or, as it is now more fashionable to say, who exemplified authentic existence.'[2]

In the history of Christian civilization one finds theism and atheism, faith in God and rejection of God idea, existing almost side by side. We have deliberately ignored references to Christian atheism because it does not represent the central thought-current of the Christian tradition. It is well known that the Western civilization stands on its twin legs formed by the Bibical and the Greek strands of thought; we venture to submit that the two have hardly been harmonized at any time, and the controversy between faith and reason continues.[3]

There are some other Christian perspectives of God, particularly those of the mystics and agnostics, but the limitations of space here prevent us from compiling more opinions. A passing reference may be made to the famous views of Meister Eckhart whom D.T. Suzuki has referred to as 'an extraordinary Christian.'[4]

A leading existentialist thinker, Karl Jaspers, says that 'God is not an object of knowledge, of compelling evidence. He cannot be experienced by the senses. He is invisible, He cannot be seen but only believed in. But whence comes this faith? Its source is not in the limits of worldly experience but in the freedom of man. The man who attains true awareness of his freedom gains certainty of God.'[1] The philosopher adds that faith is necessary for an enlightened life: 'The purest enlightenment recognizes that it cannot dispense with faith . . . It is not possible to impose faith by rational means, by any science or philosophy.'[2] We may add here that faith, which springs from the true awareness of man's freedom, becomes strengthened by practice. It is only in the actual practice of life that the certainty of faith can be verified. The scripture says that 'God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'[3]

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[1] See Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, Cleveland and New York, 1969.

[2] Gordon D. Kaufman, op. cit., p. 247.

[3] Reference may be made to the so-called scientific attitude to the conception of God, an example of which will be found in Julian Huxley, *Religion Without Revelation*, New York, 1957, especially chapter 3, pp. 49ff.

[4] D.T. Suzuki, *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, New York, 1957, p. 11; Rudolf Otto has studied Eckhart in the context of Advaita Vedānta of Śaṃkara, *Mysticism: East and West*, New York, 1970. R.B. Blakney's English trans. of a major portion of Eckhart's known works in German may be read in the edition, New York, 1941.

In conclusion, it is pertinent to note that some eminent modern Christians no longer hold the traditional exclusivist Christian view that Christianity is unique, or that the Christian conception of God alone is true and right. They emphasize the 'Christian view of God as being love,' and they criticize exclusive-mindedness as 'a sinful state of mind.' Arnold Toynbee, for instance, argues that if God is the god of all men and is also another name for love, it follows that all the higher religions are revelations of what is true and right.[4] This broad-minded approach to conceptions of God outside of the Christian Church is a most welcome feature of contemporary Christianity.

IN ISLAM

Judaism, Christianity and Islam have a common monotheistic vision of God. Islam has consistently stressed the unity of God or Allàh and the finality of Muhammad as His Apostle. An outstanding element of Islamic belief is that the *Qur'an* is the Speech of God. The Muslims derive their knowledge of God from this Scripture. Just as in Christianity, God is known through Jesus Christ, so in Islam God is known through the *Qur'an*. The 112th *sura* of this text, 'the short confession of God's unity which is of paramount importance for Islamic thought, theology and spiritual life,'[5] has the following four lines:

'Say: He is Allah, the One
Allah, the eternally Besaught of all

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[1] Karl Jaspers, *Way to Wisdom*, New Haven, 1954, pp. 44-45.

[2] ibid, pp. 93-94. [3] *John*, 4.24.

[4] Arnold Toynbee, *Christianity Among the Religions of the World*, New York, 1957, especially pp. 83ff. Ibid, *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, London, 1956; Wilfred Cantwell Smith in *The History of Religions* (see p. 127 note 1), pp. 31-58, and Friedrich Heiler in ibid, pp. 132-60.

[5] A. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, Leiden, 1963, p. 95.

> He begetteth not nor was begotten.
> And there is none comparable to Him.'[1]

God is called 'the Lord' (*al-Rabb*) and 'the Merciful' (*al-Rahman*); but His best known name is Allah, a 'Being who exists necessarily by Himself, comprising all the attributes of perfection.'[2]

'He is God than whom there is no other God'; this is to say, there is only one God. He is the Knower of the invisible and the visible; He is the Creator, the Supreme Lord, Holy One, Peace, the Keeper of Faith, the Guardian and the Mighty.[3] God is the Supreme Person who speaks, hears, judges, and upholds the universe. The belief in God's creation and providence leads devout Muslims to view the whole creation as ordered and beautiful. God is 'He who is the fountainhead of the grace, beauty, and perfection which subsist in every corner of His creation.'[4] The idea of God as *Rabb* suggests that He is not far off and unconcerned with His creation. As Mawlana Azad puts it, 'To visualize God as *Rabbul-Alamin* or the *Rabb* of all creation is to conceive of Him as not only Creator of everything in the universe but its nourisher and sustainer as well.'[5] The ninety-nine names of Allah throw considerable light on the nature and functions of the Lord of the world and the Master of mankind. But these names do not exhaust His perfections.[6]

God is the supreme Refuge and 'Islam is a religion based on the universal principle of submission to God.'[7] Some Muslim theologians have held the view that Allah is not a pure Being or Absolute without attributes, while others view Him as an 'Infinite Ego.' According to Muhammad Iqbal, 'God Himself is an individual, He is the most unique individual.'[8] Commenting on the views of Avicenna (10th century AD) Seyyed Hossein Nasr has made the following observation: 'Everything in the Universe, by the very fact that it exists, is plunged in Being; yet, God, or Pure Being, who is the Origin and Creator of all things, is *not* the first term in a continuous chain and therefore does not have a "substantial" and "horizontal" continuity with the beings of the world. Rather, God is anterior to the Universe and transcendent with respect to it. It is God as conceived in the religions of the Abrahmic Tradition.'[1]

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[1] *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, An Explanatory trans. by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, New York, n.d., p. 454.

[2] *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. by James Hastings, Edinburgh, VI, article on 'God (Muslim)', p. 299ff.

[3] *Glorious Koran*, op. cit., 59, 22-24, pp. 394-95.

[4] Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad, *The Tarjumān-al-Qur'an*, ed. and trans. by Sayed Abdul Latif, Bombay, 1962, I, p. 13.

[5] ibid, p. 20.

[6] The list of ninety-nine names of God may be seen in Daud Rahbar, *God of Justice: A Study in the Ethical Doctrine of the Qur'an*, Leiden, 1960, pp. 9-10.

[7] M. Abdul Haq Ansari in *Islam*, Patiala, 1969, p. 1.

[8] After A. Schimmel, op. cit., p. 94.

In accordance with the Judaeo-Christian or Abrahmic Tradition, Islam also acknowledges the existence of angels. Those who believe in Allah, also believe in His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers.[2] A whole *sura* of the Scripture (the 35th) is named after the angels. These angels are appointed by God, just as He chooses His messengers.

Some Muslim mystics have viewed God as Supreme Light, and they have been designated as 'Illuminationists.' According to Suhrawardi (12th century AD), 'The Essence of the First Absolute Light, God, gives constant illumination, whereby it is manifested and it brings all things into existence, giving life to them by its rays. Everything in the world is derived from the Light of His essence and all beauty and perfection are the gift of His bounty, and to attain fully to this illumination is salvation.'[3]

IN SIKHISM

The youngest among all the religions of the world, Sikhism presents us with a vision of God which is nearly similar to the one we have met with in Islam.[4] The Sikh faith in the reality of God is based primarily on the knowledge of Him revealed by a series of ten Teachers (*gurus*) beginning with Guru Nānak and ending with Guru Gobind Singh. The Speech of Teachers (*gurbāṇī*) is the source of knowledge of God, His relationship with man and the world. He who does not believe in the existence of God and the authority of the *gurbāṇī* is not a Sikh. The entire *Guru Grantha Sāhib* glorifies the greatness and majesty of God and describes His perfections, powers, functions and attributes in such richness as is perhaps rarely found elsewhere.

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[1] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, Cambridge, 1964, p. 25.

[2] *Qur'an*, 2.255.

[3] After Seyyed Hossein Nasr, op. cit., p. 69.

[4] For the Sikh views and interpretations of and comments on their idea of God the reader is recommended the following works: *Sri Guru Granth Sāhib*, trans. into English by Gopal Singh, Delhi, n.d. I-IV, especially *Introduction*; Trilochan Singh 'Theological Concepts of Sikhism' in *Sikhism*, Patiala, 1969, pp. 40-77; Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, Lahore, 1948; Teja Singh in *The Cultural*

The basic formula (*mūlamantra*), with which the Sikh Scripture opens, contains the heart of Sikh theology and faith. According to it, God is one, His name is Truth. He is the Creator-Person, (*kartā-purakhu*), Omnipotent (*nirbhau*), Compassionate (*nirvairu*), Timeless-Reality (*akāla-mūrati*), Unborn, Self-existent (*saibhang*), (to be attained) through the blessing (*prasādi*) of the Teacher (*guru*).[1]

Although the Scripture employs many words for God, such as Hari, Rām, Gobind, etc., known to the Brahmanical Purāṇas, they are understood to refer to the Formless Lord of the universe. The gods of the Brahmanical tradition are not denied; instead they are treated as parts of His creation; God is the Creator, Sustainer, Ordainer (*hukami*) and Master of the whole universe; He is Omnipresent but Immaculate (*nirañjan*), All-powerful but Merciful (*diyālu*) and generous Giver (*dātār*). Everything is dependent on His Ordinance or Will (*hukam*), including a man's liberation (*mokhu*). His love is boundless, His treasure endless, andH is light all-pervasive. Human beings can reach Him by acting in consonance with His Will; God's will is known through the word (*sabab*); and the word is known through the Guru. Although God does not take birth as a man--there are no *avatāras* of God—, He listens to earnest entreaties, answers prayers, is pleased by those who follow the Guru, and purifies the sinners and the fallen. Thus although God is transcendent (*pārabrahma*) in so far as He is Infinite (*be-ant*) and Incomprehensible (*agama*), He is active, through His Will, in the finite realm of created beings, and to this extent He is viewed as immanent.

SUMMARY OF THE IDEA OF GOD

The preceding excursion into five perspectives of God has brought to our notice some tentative conclusions which may be submitted below.

Heritage of India, Calcutta, 1956; IV, Bhai Jodh Singh, *Gurmati Nirṇai*, Ludhiana, 1932.

[1] *Sabdārth Sri Guru Granth Sāhiba*, Patiala, 1953, I, p. 1. My translation. The word *prasāda*, in my opinion, is conceptually quite different in meaning from the word *grace*. I have here rendered it as blessing; it can also be rendered as happy disposition, serene disposition; cp. *kṛpā-dṛṣṭi*, which rises from pleasure or propitiousness.

The word *God* is one of the many names of an eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, living Person radically different from human persons. Men's knowledge about God is primarily based on belief or faith[1] in His existence revealed either by a book such as the *Qur'an* or by a Messiah such as Moses or Christ or by an Avatāra such as Kṛṣṇa or by human sages and seers such as those of the Vedic Upaniṣads or the Sikh Gurus. The living God thus speaks and reveals His existence to gods, angels and men. He may be infinite and even formless, but He is related to the finite and acts and speaks; therefore, it is permissible to conclude that, God is the Person who creates, acts and moves, gives and receives.

The most important thing in theistic doctrines of God is that He is the creator of the universe and of all its living and non-living things. All men (and all living beings) are His children. He is the loving and good father; He rules over the universe and the destinies of all men; love and justice characterize His will which is irresistible and supreme. All religious-minded theists emphasize God's personality and immanence while the philosophically minded theists emphasize the impersonal nature and transcendence of God. All theologies or theistic philosophies take the world as real and creation of a real creator.

It is not the present writer's intention to criticize and refute the doctrine of God. This has been done by ancient Buddhist philosophers and we will refer to their views in very brief hereafter. A few observations, however, may be offered here by way of comment on the idea of God.

All the theistic religions, Brahmanism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism, are said to be monotheistic, expounding the existence of *one God.* But in all these forms of monotheism one finds two types of *dualisms.* To talk of dualism as inherent in monotheism sounds unpleasant, but it is a fact which cannot be overlooked.

To accept God as the creator of the world and of its beings is to accept that God is the author of both good as well as evil that exist in this world and in beings that live here. As Arnold Toynbee[2] puts the problem : 'If God is the author of evil as well as good, as He must be if He is absolute and all-inclusive, Man will be embracing evil as well as good in putting himself in harmony with God.' Of course, the theists do not accept the view that man has to embrace evil, because that is not religiously true; man has to choose only good and avoid evil. But he has to admit that *God's creation contains evil which is contrary to His goodness.*

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[1] W.C. Smith (see p. 120 note 1) p. 6, makes a case for a possible difference between belief and faith.

[2] Arnold Toynbee, *Christianity Among the Religions of the World*, pp. 22-23.

The second form of dualism in monotheistic doctrine is that God as the governor of the world is somehow immanent and ever present in it; but God is greater or more than the world, is not exhausted by it, and therefore, He somehow transcends its finiteness. The relation between the Creator and the creation, Infinite and finite, Transcendent and immanent, is also a real theological problem when we accept creation as real. God is eternal *changeless reality*, whereas this world is in flux, an ever *changing reality*. These two realities, like the other two realities (good and evil), are mutually irreconcilable.

Theistic philosophers have argued too much and perhaps needlessly to prove the existence of God, the creator and governor of the world. They know that God is *wholly other* than what they themselves are, that the Kingdom of God is diametrically opposed to the Realm of Māra, yet they have insisted on the dogma of *creation by God.* The atheists who pointed out that the evil in the creation was unworthy of God have been denounced, persecuted and rejected; the theists have been so much preoccupied with associating *this world* with God that they have reduced the meaning of human religiousness to belief in a personal creator-God. All theistic philosophies have their point of departure in God, the wholly other; contrary to this fashion, the Buddhist teaching made the self-evident unsatisfactoriness (*duḥkha*) of existence in this phenomenal world its starting point and broadcast its scheme of transcending it declaring that it (the phenomenal world) is ultimately unreal.

The Buddhist alternative of God can be recognized only outside the doctrine of a creator-God. The one and the only final goal of Buddhist spiritual culture is to get rid of the conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) realm; this shows how fundamentally it differs from all the theologies of creation. Its attitude to a creator-God is equally extraordinary. Let us now turn our attention to this attitude.

BUDDHIST ATTITUDE TO GOD

We attempted above to clarify the meaning of God according to the scriptures and theologians of theistic religions so that we could set forth the Buddhist attitude to God in simple and clear words. Some modern Hindus, Christians, and Muslims have, however, perhaps unconsciously and with good intentions, introduced elements of confusion in the study and interpretation of Buddhist ideas about Transcendental Reality. They have suggested that the reality of God was not rejected by the Buddha, and that the 'silence' which He maintained in this respect has to be understood as an implicit or tacit acceptance of the indescribability of God.[1]

The question 'Did the Buddha believe in the existence of God?,' it must be stated here, has been asked by non-Buddhists. It has been answered also by the non-Buddhists. Non-Buddhist questions must have non-Buddhist answers too. Here we may be permitted to quote, for a second time, the opinion of Wilfred Cantwell Smith: 'no statement about a religion is valid unless it can be acknowledged by that religion's believers.'[2]

It has been said by several modern writers that Buddhism is not a religion; but the Buddhists do not even take note of such a view, although many non-Buddhist students of Buddhism have now learned to appreciate Emil Durkheim's suggestion as to what should be the definition of religion.[3] Recently Trevor Ling has suggested that one should speak of 'Buddhist civilization' instead of Buddhist religion, for 'religions as we know them are reduced civilizations.'[4] This suggestion misses the vital difference between the transcendental Dharma and its human manifestations which constitute Buddhist civilization. The question whether Buddhism should be called a religion or not is, in our opinion, insignificant. What others call

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[1] Only three eminent representatives, one each of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, may be cited here: Radhakrishnan, 'The Teaching of Buddha by Speech and by Silence' in *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. 32, pp. 350f; R.L. Slater, *Paradox and Nirvāṇa*, Chicago, 1950, p. 121; Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad, *The Tarjumān-al-Qur'an*, Bombay, 1962, I, p. 115.

[2] See above p. 127 note 1.

[3] Emil Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. by Joseph Ward Swain, New York, 1968, pp. 45-46.

[4] Trevor Ling, *The Buddha: Buddhist Civilization in India and Ceylon*, London, 1973, pp. 16-17.

religion and *Buddhism*, the Buddhists themselves call *Dharma*. If the followers of 'religions' think that Buddhism does not deserve the sacred name of 'religion,' let them not confuse between Dharma and religion. If, however, Dharma has meant for its followers what religion has meant for the followers of religion, either Christian or any other, the controversy is unworthy of a serious consideration.

But the meaning of the word religion is related, at least in part, to the meaning of God. Those who hesitate to call Buddhism a religion obviously recognize the absence of their conception of God in it.

There are some other scholars who recognize that Buddhism has every claim to be called a religion; they think that the Buddhist concept of Nirvāṇa or Dharma offers a 'new concept of God' which is non-theistic. In other words, the 'religious atheism' of the Buddhists centres round a non-theistic concept of 'God.' This is the view, if I have understood rightly, of Wilfred Cantwell Smith.[1] Unfortunately, however he does not clarify the meaning of the word 'God,' especially, the point concerning God's creatorship and lordship. He does say, towards the end of his brilliant essay, that 'the word "God" is a symbol' of a *reality* about which none can be dogmatic. One may ask: Is this *reality* identical with or different from the Creator and Lord of the universe? If it is identical with the Personal-Creator-Lord, then we may be sure that the Buddhists are certainly not talking about the same 'God' when they are affirming 'Truth' or 'Reality' or 'Peace,' or 'Supreme Bliss' revealed by the Transcendent One (*tathāgata*).

On the other hand, if the *reality* referred to by the symbol 'God' is different from the Personal-Creator-Lord, and, if the theists and followers of religions admit the possibility of having a non-theistic concept of 'God,' then the Buddhists will have no objection to adding this symbol to their long list of symbols and words referring to the Transcendent Truth. If Nirvāṇa is God in the sense of being the Transcendent Truth, we, who are ill-faring in a world enveloped by spiritual darkness, tormented by physical and mental diseases, and overpowered by the dreadful arms of death, cannot quite comprehend it; and those who realize it themselves transcend our comprehension.

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[1] See p. 7 of the work cited above on p. 120 note 1.

The real problem does not lie in what word or symbol we choose to indicate the Transcendent Reality. It lies, rather in how we view the world we are faring in.

The basic problem of all theistic theologies, in the eyes of Buddhism, is that they attribute the creatorship of and lordship over this world to an eternal God. Buddhist attitude to God cannot be understood or grasped apart from the Buddhist attitude to the 'created' realm. As a matter of fact, Buddhist refutation of the doctrine of God is partly based on the notions of God's eternality and creatorship.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST CREATOR-LORD

In order to have an idea of the Buddhist attitude to the doctrine of Personal-Creator-Lord, we will only briefly refer to some of the arguments advanced by the Buddhist philosophers and suggest the relevant literature to the interested reader.

Kamalaśīla notes that some theists hold that the creator of the whole world is a distinct Self (*ātman*), the omniscient Lord (*īśvara*), endowed with special qualities, while other theists say that the creator is a Being distinct from Self, because He is eternal (*nitya*), possessed of the knowledge of all things, and having qualities different from those of the substance. This is part of his comment on Śāntarakṣita's statement that 'some philosophers declare the Lord (*Īśa*) to be the cause (*hetu*) of all things produced.' This view is criticized and rejected in the following words. 'God cannot be the cause of born things, because He is Himself devoid of birth, like a sky-lotus (*gaganāṃbhojavat*), otherwise all things would come into existence simultaneously.' A sky-lotus is never born and cannot be the cause of anything, that which is unborn cannot be the cause of things born. Next, the logicians argue that since the omniscience of God rests on His creatorship, the refutation of God's creatorship sets aside His claim to omniscience. They also point out that the Creator of all the diverse worlds and their multifarious beings and things cannot be one, and in the absence of God's unity on what would His omniscience subsist?[1]

The following is the summary of Śāntideva's arguments pressed against a theist:

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[1] *Tattvasaṃgraha*, verses 87, 91-93. See the English trans. of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* with Kamalaśīla's *Pañjikā* on it by Ganganatha Jha, 2 vols., Baroda, 1937, 1939.

'God is the cause of the world' : say, who is that God ? If He is the elements (earth, water etc.), why then trouble merely for a name or word? However, the elements are many, impermanent, lacking in intelligent effort, without sanctity or purity, God is not so. God cannot be the space (*ākāśa*) because space is inactive, nor can He be *ātman* which we (Buddhists) have already refuted. (If you say that God is unthinkable, then we reply that) an unthinkable God's creatorship also is unthinkable and nothing can be said about it. (May be, He is unthinkable because of His extremely impenetrable essence, yet His works are thinkable). What does He want to create? Perhaps *ātman* ? No, because *ātman* is eternal. Perhaps the elements, the earth, etc.? (But these too are eternal).

God being Himself eternal (*dhruva*), would not desire to create Himself. Knowledge is also not created by Him as it is based upon the object of knowledge and has no beginning. Similarly, happiness and suffering proceed from actions (*karma*). Say, then, what has God created? If the cause (*hetu* i.e. God-Creator) has no beginning, how can the effect (*phala* i.e. creation) have a beginning? Why does God not act always? He does not have to depend on others. He has created all the others. What prevents Him from acting always? Does He need material nexus for creation (like a weaver who needs yarn etc., for weaving a piece of cloth)? If so, He is not Creator-Lord. The Lord is no creator if the material nexus of creation exists; He cannot create if this nexus does not exist. If the Lord creates without desiring to create, then He is subject to some one else; if He creates desiring to do so, He is subject to desire. How then is His Lordship possible?[1]

According to the Abhidharma schools, all the things produced are produced by a plurality of causes and conditions and not by Lord etc. While the theists assume Īśvara as the First Cause, the Sāṃkhyas, who are atheists, assume that creation issues from Pradhāna or Prakṛti, the Primordial Matter. Vasubandhu declares that 'the pre-occupation with the dogma of Lord etc. (as the cause of the world) is due to the erroneous belief in an eternal soul (*ātman*). This belief is eradicated through the realization of impermanence and suffering (in the world).'[2] The author of the *Abhidharmadīpa* states that 'the cause of the world (*loka*) lies in the actions (*karma*) and not in a Lord etc. (*na-īśvara-ādayaḥ*)'[1] He also points out that the Bhāgavatas, who believe Viṣṇu to be the Creator-Lord, disparage Maheśvara or Śiva, while the Māheśvaras, who believe Maheśvara to be the Creator-Lord, disparage Viṣṇu.[2] He is driving at the fact that the theists themselves are not unanimous about the name and nature of the creator.

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[1] *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, ed. P.L. Vaidya, *BST*, no. 12, Darbhanga, 1960, IX. 119-26. My translation.

[2] *Abhidharmakośa-Bhāṣya*, ed. by P. Pradhan, Patna, 1967, II. 64 and V. 8.

Āryaśūra refers to the doctrine of a supreme Lord (*īśvara*) as the first cause as a 'false doctrine.'[3] Aśvaghoṣa notes that 'if Īśvara is the source of the whole creation, then the effort of human person is fruitless.'[4] The following statement is attributed to the Buddha in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* : 'The personal soul, continuity, the *skandhas*, causal factors, atoms, Pradhāna, Īśvara, and Creator—(these are) discriminations in the mere Mind.'[5]

A detailed and systematic refutation of the doctrine of the existence of creator—God by the Buddhist logicians may be studied in the following Sanskrit texts: *Pramāṇavārttika* of Dharmakīrti with commentaries,[6] the *Īśvaravāda* of Jñānaśrīmitra,[7] and the *Īśvarasādhanadūṣaṇa* of Ratnakīrti.[8] The *Tattvasaṃgraha* of Śāntarakṣita with the *Pañjika* (commentary) of Kamalaśīla, which have been cited above, contain a reasoned and substained criticism of theism. Besides these, there exists in the Tibetan translation, the *Īśvarabhaṅga-kārikā* of Kalyāṇarakṣita.[9]

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[1] *Abhidharmadīpa* with *Vibhāṣā-prabhā-vṛtti*, ed. by Padmanabh S. Jaini, Patna, 1959, verse 155, p. 118.

[2] ibid, p. 120. See also ibid, pp. 231-33, 319.

[3] *Jātakamālā*, ed. by P.L. Vaidya, *BST*, no. 21, Darbhanga, 1959, p. 153.

[4] *Buddhacarita*, IX. 53; see E.B. Cowell's Eng. trans. in *SBE*, vol. XLIX, p. 100.

[5] *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, II. 137, p. 34 in the edition by P.L. Vaidya, *BST*, no. 3, Darbhanga, 1963.

[6] *Pramāṇavārttika-Kārikā* (Sanskrit and Tibetan, ed. by Yusho Miyasaka, *Acta Indologica*, II, Naritasan Shinshoji, 1971-72), I. 12-18; *Pramāṇavārttika*, First Chapter with auto-commentary of Dharmakīrti, ed. by R. Gnoli, Rome, 1960; *Pramāṇavārttika-Bhāṣyam* of Prajñākaragupta ed. by Rāhula Sāṃkṛtyāyana, Patna, 1953.

[7] *Īśvaravāda* in *Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāvalī*, ed. by Anantlal Thakur, Patna, 1959, pp. 233-316.

[8] *Īśvarasādhanadūṣaṇa* in *Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalī*, ed. by Anantlal Thakur, Patna, 1957, pp. 25-52.

[9] *Īśvarabhaṅgakārikā* (Dbaṅ-phyug-ḥjig-paḥi tshig leḥur byas-pa) extant in the

Helmuth von Glasenapp's book, translated by Irmgard Schloegl,[1] gives a summary of the Buddhist arguments against theism. The works of Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Ratnakīrti, Jñānaśrīmitra and Kalyāṇarakṣita have not been utilized by him. To give a comprehensive treatment of the Buddhist criticism and refutation of theism will require a large volume.

The Buddhist standpoint is that there exists neither a real self or soul nor a created world of permanent things and beings. How can there be a Creator-Lord of non-existent things and beings? Nāgārjuna says: 'The whole world is the cause and consequence, there is no living being apart from this. From the unreal things appear unreal things.'[2] One of the basic doctrines of the Mahāyāna is that nothing is created, nothing originates. Edward Conze observes: 'The born metaphysician is a person who, unlike the ordinary run of mankind, is astonished at the fact that there is anything at all. He wonders why that should be so and looks for an explanation. The Semitic traditions tell him that things exist because God created them. Here (in Buddhism), however, the answer is that they are uncreated, absolutely uncreated, and that is the sense in which they exist.'[3] There is no real existence here and therefore no real creation. In the absence of any real creation how can there be a real creator? As the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* puts it: 'Why is existence regarded as unborn or unoriginated? Because there is neither creating nor created and therefore, there is no causer (i.e. creator).'[4]

The talk about the originator of an unreal phenomenon such as the world sounds like the talk about the father of a barren woman's daughter.

So far we have not referred to the doctrine of Creator-Lord as known to the ancient Pali texts. The reason for preference to later Buddhist treatises in Sanskrit was no other than this that in them a systematic and detailed examination and refutation of theism has

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Tibetan, Text no 5745, in vol. 138, of the Peking edn. of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Kyoto, 1958.

[1] *Buddhism: A Non-Theistic Religion*, London, 1970.

[2] *Pratītyasamutpāda-hṛdaya-kārikā*, verse 4. My translation. See the text ed. L. Jamspal and Peter Della Santina in *The Journal of the Department of Buddhist Studies*, University of Delhi, no. 1, 1974, p. 29.

[3] Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, p. 222.

[4] D.T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, London, 1968, p. 122. See the Sanskrit text of this *sūtra*; op. cit., p. 47; lines 25-26.

been made. This is not the case with the Pali Canon; at the time of the compilation of the Pali texts, the theistic ideas were not fully developed though they had gained currency among some brāhmaṇas and *śramaṇas* already in the age of Śākyamuni.

THE POSITION OF BRAHMAN-BRAHMA

The Vedic word for one ultimate Reality or God is Brahman (neuter). In some later Vedic texts, such as the Brāhmaṇas, the masculine form Brahmā is also used in the same sense. The idea of the world of Brahman, Brahmaloka, and the possibility of man's attaining to it are also hinted at in some texts. In the early Upaniṣads these ideas are further developed and a new dogma of the identity of the individual self (*ātman*) with God or Brahman-Brahmā is announced in some passages.

According to the chronology adopted in these pages, no Upaniṣad text can be dated before the age of the Buddha. The doctrine of Brahmā as the Great God, known to the Vedic tradition and criticized in the Pali Canon, therefore, refers in all likelihood to the pre-Upaniṣadic view. The Buddhist criticism, of course, is applicable to the early Upaniṣadic doctrine also in so far as it was related to the pre-Upaniṣadic tradition of thought. In view of this, it is possible to say that in criticising the doctrine of the eternality of Brahmā, the Pali Canon criticized and rejected the doctrine of Brahman also because the same God is called Brahmā and Brahman in the Brāhmaṇas.[1]

Hithertofore, some scholars, including the present writer, had believed that the Pali Tripiṭaka, especially the Nikāyas, do not refer to or criticize the Upaniṣadic tenet of Brahman (neuter). I now abandon that view and maintain that even before the Upaniṣads the Vedic teachers had employed (neuter) Brahman for (masculine) Brahmā. This fact has a very important consequence for the fashionable tendency of equating the notion of Vedic Brahman with the Buddhist idea of Nirvāṇa. Referring to the Buddhist criticism of Brahmanical conception of fellowship with Brahmā, contained in the Pali *Tevijjasutta*, K.N. Jayatilleke has made the following observation:

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[1] See A.B. Keith, *Ṛgveda Brāhmaṇas*, trans. Cambridge (Mass.), 1920, p. 27; K.N. Jyatilleke, op. cit., pp. 178-79.

'The conception of Brahmā (masc.) is not a hypostatized version of the Upaniṣadic Brahman (neuter) as Oldenberg surmised, but the personal conception of Brahmā which emerges at a certain stage in the evolution of the Brāhmaṇas and is found in the Early Upaniṣads. Inasmuch as the Vedas were derived from this Brahmā in the Brahmanical and Upaniṣadic tradition, the Buddhist criticism that none of the earlier seers or their successors had seen Brahmā amounts to a denial of the very foundations of the Vedic tradition. It seems to deny that the Vedic tradition can claim to be revelational tradition at all.'[1]

The Vedic texts mention Puruṣa, Prajāpati, Brahmā and Brahman some times as though these four words denoted four different deities or realities. But Puruṣa is often identified with Brahman or Ātman, and Prajāpati is identified with Brahmā. In the *Ṛgveda*, the creator of the Vedas is Puruṣa;[2] in the Brāhmaṇas the creator of the Vedas is said to be Prajāpati;[3] these texts then identify Prajāpati with Brahmā.[4] The most important and revealing fact is that, according to the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, 'Brahman became Brahmā of his own.'[5] Thus the absolutist conception of Brahman existed along with the personal conception of Brahmā and the two were firmly identified. Attainment of unity with Him meant entering His world called Brahmaloka. As late as the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*,[6] the Vedic theologians held that 'the meritorious Brahmaloka was attainable by performing good (sacrificial) acts.'

The existence of Brahman-Brahmā is recognized in the Pali Canon. He is the 'Great God' called Mahā-Brahmā. The Buddha did not deny his existence, and he is mentioned in the Pali texts at numerous places. Brahmā is a Mighty Deity, morally excellent, and living in the highest heaven. People believed in his existence and conceived of him in the same terms in which theists consider Creator-Lord. All the high-sounding epithets attributed to God were attributed to Brahmā:

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[1] K.N. Jayatilleke, op. cit., pp. 460-81. Jayatilleke, of course, places the 'Early Upaniṣads' in 700 BC, a date for which I find no definite evidence.

[2] *Ṛgveda*, X. 90.

[3] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI. 1.1.8; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, II. 3.10.1; III. 3.2.1.

[4] *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, III. 3.8.3. *prajāpatyo vai brahma*. See also *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, Uttarabhāga*, III. 18.

[5] *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, III. 12.9.3 *brahm-brahmā-bhavat-svayam*.

[6] I. 2-6.

'That illustrious Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, Supreme, All-Seeing, Ruler, Lord (*issara*), Creator, Maker, Excellent, Designer, Almighty Father of beings that are and are to be, by whom we were created, He the Changeless, Eternal, Permanent, (*nicco-dhuvo-sassato*), of changeless character.'[1] Those who maintained such a doctrine of Brahmā are called Eternalists and the doctrine is rejected by the Buddha as a perverted view.

In the *Tevijjasutta* the Buddha shows that the brāhmaṇas, versed in three-fold science (*trayī-vidyā*) of the Vedas, do not know the way to union with Brahmā; neither the makers of the Vedas nor their latest successors, the brāhmaṇas who were His contemporaries, had ever seen Brahmā. The brāhmaṇa theologians, who claimed to know the way to union with Brahmā and taught it to others, are compared to a man who is in love with a girl whom he has never seen nor knows her whereabouts. The Buddha describes Brahmā as a moral being, free from anger and malice, pure in heart and possessed of self-mastery. The Buddha then announces that He knows Brahmā, He knows Brahmaloka, and He knows the way leading to it. 'I know it even as one who has entered the Brahmaloka, and has been born within it.'[2]

It will be seen that in the *Brahmajālasutta* we find the doctrine of an eternal, omniscient, creator Brahmā upheld by some philosophers possibly of Vedic tradition. In the *Tevijjasutta* we find that the Vedic brāhmaṇas aimed at attaining fellowship (*sāyujya*, Pali *sahabyatā*) with this Brahmā in his heaven called Brahmaloka, and claimed to know the path to this fellowship. The Buddha rejects the former doctrine as a false theory (*mithyādṛṣṭi*); in the latter case, He rejects the claim of the Vedic brāhmaṇas to any knowledge about Brahmā or his world; on the other hand, He claims to know Brahmā and to have seen his world. He tells the brāhmaṇas that one can attain Brahmaloka by the practice of loving kindness (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*) etc., toward all living beings.

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[1] *Dīghanikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, p. 18 (*Brahmajālasutta*). Author's trans. T.W. Rhys Davids's translation may be seen in *Dialogues of the Buddha*, London, 1969, part I, p. 32.

[2] *Dīghanikāya*, I, pp. 199ff, p. 210. See the *Dialogues of the Buddha*, part I, pp. 300ff.

In the *Aṅguttaranikāya* we are told that the Buddha, in former days, in one of His former births, had been a Māha Brahmā. 'I became Brahmā, Great Brahmā, Supreme, Unconquered, All-Seeing, Almighty. Thirty-six times I was Śakra (Indra), the king of gods.'[1] It was in this sense that Buddha claimed to know Brahmā, his world and the way leading to it.

It will be an error to suppose that Brahmā is recognized as the Supreme Reality or God. The orthodox Buddhist view is that he is the greatest God, morally perfect, superior to all the other gods in knowledge and glory. But *he is not eternal, nor omniscient, nor even creator; he is subject to karma* and therefore to rebirth.

The status of Mahā Brahmā can be attained by any one through the practice of *brahmavihāras* or holy virtues and the observance of moral rules. Many Buddhist monks are reported to have attained Brahmaloka.

Brahmā, according to the Buddhist view, is a kind of impermanent regent of the cosmos; he comes to request the Buddha to preach the Dharma to the world as we see in the ancient texts.[2] His ignorance is disclosed in the *Kevaṭṭasutta* where a Buddhist monk goes to Brahmaloka and asks Great Brahmā the following question:

'Friend, where do the four great elements . . . earth, water, fire and wind . . . cease, leaving no trace behind?' Brahmā replied: 'I do not know, monk, where the four great elements . . . earth, water, fire, and wind . . . cease, leaving no trace behind . . . you should go to the Blessed One, ask Him the question, and accept the answer according as He would reply.'[3]

The Brahmanical theory of the ultimate origin of things from Brahmā is clearly rejected. In the *Pāthikasutta* the doctrine that the origin of things is the work of a Lord (*issara*) or Brahmā is mentioned. The brāhmaṇas and other thinkers who maintained this view were unable to fully explain their dogma; instead, they asked the Buddha a counter-question. The Buddha then related the evolution of various gods.[1]

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Nalanda edn., III, p. 221 (*Mettasutta*) see trans. by E.M. Hare, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, London, 1965, IV, p. 54.

[2] *Mahāvagga*, Nalanda edn., p. 6; *Lalitavistāra*, Darbhanga edn., p. 287.

[3] *Dīghanikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, pp. 188-89.

In the *Māratajjanīyasutta* it is shown that Buddhahood is far superior to the position of Great Brahmā, and that Brahmā's radiance is temporary. The following statement is put into this god's mouth.

'Noble sir, I do not hold those views now that I formerly held. I see the luminosity of Brahmaloka is passing. How can I say today: I am eternal, everlasting?'[2] Thus this Great God, Mahā-Brahmā, is neither omniscient nor eternal. Those gods who dwell in his *loka*, heaven, know less than the Arhats.[3]

Ridiculing the belief that pleasure and pain are due to the creation by Lord (*issara-nimmāna-hetu*), the Buddha takes the theist's argument and says: 'Monks, if the beings undergo happiness and suffering due to the creation by a Lord, certainly, monks, the Tathāgata was created by a favourable Lord in that He now experiences such unblemished pleasant feelings.'[4]

Finally, attention may be invited to a few Pali verses in the *Jātaka* refuting the creatorship of Īśvara or Brahmā on the ground of existence of evil and unrighteousness in the world. A verse in the *Mahābodhi-Jātaka* reads as follows: 'If there is a Lord of the whole world, possessed of the power to fill every being with happiness and suffering, good and evil actions, that Lord (*issara*) is *stained*, because man only works his will.'[5] Three verses in the *Bhūridatta-Jātaka* press nearly the same argument:

'If Brahmā is the lord of the whole world (*issaro sabba loke*), the plentiful master of all beings and things, why he does not properly arrange this whole unfortunate world? Why does he not spread happiness in the whole world?

'If Brahmā is the lord of the whole world, the plentiful master of all beings and things, why fraud (*māyā*), falsehood, lowliness, ignorance, and unrighteousness prevail in the world?

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[1] *Dighanikāya*, Nalanda edn., III, pp. 23ff.

[2] *Majjhimanikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, p. 412; English trans. by I.B. Horner may be seen in *The Middle Length Sayings*, London, 1967, I, p. 402.

[3] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, III, (*Tissa-Brahmasutta*), pp. 209ff.

[4] *Majjhimanikāya*, III, (*Devadahasutta*), p. 20.

[5] *Jātaka* in *Khuddakanikāya*, III, part 2, Nalanda edn., 1959, pp. 53, verse 142. My translation.

'If Brahmā is the lord of the whole world, the plentiful master of all beings and things, he is an unjust lord of beings (*adhammiko bhūtapati*) and under intoxication (*ariṭṭha*) who made this thing (the world) to assign a place for unrighteousness (*adhammaṃ*).'[1]

MODERN BUDDHISTS' ATTITUDE TO GOD

As far as I know, no modern Buddhist has published any important treatise on the examination or refutation of the idea of God. It is only in a casual fashion that some Buddhists have referred to the God-idea usually in a critical tone. It will perhaps be instructive to cite a few opinions of some eminent and representative Buddhists of modern times.

All the Buddhists are united in rejecting the idea of the reality of a Personal-Creator-Lord or God. The notion of God-Creator as found in theistic traditions is not accepted by any Buddhist. Buddhism is thus, according to the Buddhists, atheistic or non-theistic. A distinguished Japanese Buddhist and a high authority on matters Buddhistic, Junjiro Takakusu, has observed: 'Buddhism is atheistic—there is no doubt about it.'[2] Clarifying the meaning of Buddhist atheism, a noted Buddhist of German origin, Nyānaponika Thera, says that 'only in one way may Buddhism be described as atheistic, namely in so far as it denies the existence of an eternal, omnipotent God or Godhead who is the creator and ordainer of the world. The word "atheism," however, frequently carries a number of disparaging overtones or implications, which in no way apply to the Buddha's teaching.'[3] This note of caution is sounded also by K.N. Jayatilleka: 'while Buddhism is atheistic, we must not forget that Buddhist atheism has at the same time to be distinguished from materialistic atheism. Buddhism asserted the falsity of a materialistic philosophy which denied survival, recompense, and responsibility as well as moral and spiritual values and obligations, no less than certain forms of theistic beliefs.'[1]

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[1] *Jātaka* in *Khuddakanikāya*, III, part 2, Nalanda edn., 1959, p. 246, verses 936-38. My translation.

[2] Junjiro Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy* ed. by Wing-Tsit Chan and Charles A. Moore, New Delhi, 1975, p. 45.

[3] Nayanaponika Thera, *Buddhism and the God-Idea*, Kandy, n.d., p. v.

Distinguished monks and scholars of Theravāda in India, Sri Lanka and Burma have been usually rather outspoken in their attitude to God. A most famous Indian Buddhist monk and Hindi writer, Anand Kausalyayan, expresses himself in these words: 'In some religions, including Hinduism, people believe in a big or small soul and a big God, with a capital letter. But when you talk to them, you invariably find that even to them their soul and God are similar to the sign '×' in Algebra, which can mean anything and everything.' Furtheron, he remarks that 'Lord Buddha never taught that there is any God who created this world. He did not believe in a creator.'[2] We have noted above the statement of Walpola Rahula who says that 'According to Buddhism, our ideas of God and Soul are false and empty.'[3] Piyadassi Thera, another noted Buddhist teacher of Sri Lanka, has argued as follows:

'If one posits a first cause one is justified in asking for the cause of that "First Cause"; for nothing can escape the law of condition and cause which is patent in the world to all but those who will not see. A theist, however, who attributes beings and events to an omnipotent Creator-God would emphatically say: "It is God's will: it is sacrilegious to question the Authority." Does not this God-idea stifle the human liberty to investigate, to analyse, to scrutinize, to see what is beyond this naked eye, and so retards insight?'[4]

This is a specimen of the Theravāda stress on Buddhist rationalism. Another example is offered by the distinguished Burmese Buddhist Thera, U Thittila. He observes: 'Buddhism is not a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, for it is not a system of faith and worship. In Buddhism, there is no such thing as belief in a body of dogmas which have to be taken on faith, such as a belief in a Supreme Being, a creator of the universe, the reality of an immortal soul, a personal saviour, or archangels who are supposed to carry out the will of the Supreme Deity.'[5]

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[1] K.N. Jayatilleke, *Facets of Buddhist Thought*; *Six Essays*, Kandy, 1971, p. 29.

[2] Anand Kausalyayan in *Buddhism*, Patiala, 1969, pp. 117-18 and 126.

[3] Walpola Rahula, op. cit., p. 52.

[4] Piyadassi Thera, *The Buddha's Ancient Path*, London, 1964, p. 59.

[5] U. Thittila in *The Path of the Buddha: Buddhism Interpreted by Buddhists*, ed. by Kenneth W. Morgan, New York, 1956, p. 71.

A most famous English Buddhist leader and author, Christmas Humphreys, notes that the 'Western thought is rapidly abandoning God, in the sense of an Absolute Creator who is yet a personal saviour of mankind, and for the many it is becoming true to say that "God is dead." But his disappearance from the field of higher thought, and from the needs of the heart, is becoming increasingly felt.' He then asks: 'What then can replace the God-concept in the Western mind for those who seek an acceptable alternative? . . . The dynamic, all-embracing, infinitely adjustable law of karma, and its inevitable corollary rebirth provides, and with greater dignity, that which in theistic faiths calls for the personal attention of a Creator-God.'[1]

Another celebrated English Buddhist Bhikshu Sangharakshita, repeats the centuries old opinion of the Buddhists when he remarks that 'The Bodhisattva can no more preach the Dharma without refuting such wrong views as belief in a creator God and an unchanging individual self than it is possible for the sun to rise without dispelling the darkness.'[2]

Finally, we may conclude with the opinion of Edward Conze: 'If indifference to a personal creator of the Universe is Atheism, then Buddhism is indeed atheistic.'[3]

Not mere 'indifference to a personal creator of the universe,' but a clear rejection of the theory of creator of the universe, has been a characteristic of classical Buddhism. Dharmakīrti, the great logician of the seventh century, had declared that 'to accept the Vedas as a means of proof, to believe in someone's creatorship, to seek religiousness through ablution, to practise casteism, and to resort to painful austerities in order to eradicate one's sins, these are the five marks of stupidity of those whose intelligence has collapsed':

vedaprāmāṇyaṃ kaśyacit kartṛvādaḥ
  snāne dharmecchā jātivādāvalepaḥ/
saṃtāpārambhaḥ pāpahānāya ceti
  dhvastaprajñāne pañca liṅgāni jāḍye[4]//

[1] Christmas Humphreys in his preface to Helmuth von Glasenapp's *Buddhism: A Non-Theistic Religion*, 1970, pp. 11-12.

[2] Bhikshu Sangharkshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 3rd edn., Bangalore, 1966, p. 475.

[3] Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, New York, 1959, p. 39.

[4] *Pramāṇavārttikakārikā*, I. 340 (in Raniero Gnoli's edn.), III. 340 (in Yusho Miyasaka's edn.).

CHAPTER VI

God's Alternative in Buddhism-II

RÉSUMÉ OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER

We have seen in the last chapter that the doctrine of God as the creator and lord of the universe is foreign to the Buddhist Tradition. A résumé of the last chapter may be made in the following words of Edward Thomas: 'It is doubtful if God as an ultimate reality, an *ens realissimum* as in Vedānta or Platonism, was conceived, but the denial of such a conception is implicit, and it is certainly denied that Brahmā is the lord, or maker of the universe, or omniscient. Equally important from the standpoint of theistic religion is the exclusion of the gods from any share in the plan of salvation. The disciple neither desires the heaven of Brahmā, nor looks to him for help in attaining the goal. He aims at attaining the ultimately real, and this is Nirvāṇa. It is not stated in such a way that it can be identified with God, but it may be said to be feeling after an expression of the same truth.'[1]

One thing in this statement calls for a brief comment: 'the exclusion of the gods from any share in the plan of salvation.'

THE REALITY OF GODS: ASPECTS OF THE SACRED

A study of the Buddhist religion necessarily involves a discussion of the nature and position of the many gods that are part of its total perspective on the sacred. The word *sacred* cannot be restricted to mean only theistic; all those things and beings that are held in religious regard or receive veneration are sacred. Some scholars seem to like a difference to be made between the sacred and the holy; the Bible is called the holy Bible, while the scriptures of non-Christian traditions are called the sacred books (of the East). The Oxford English Dictionary shows that holy and sacred are convertible terms and that in Christian senses holy is equated with Latin *sanctus, sacer*. However, Kaufman says that "Holy" 'is something we men are not, "holy" is what God, and God alone, is,' and that 'the word "holy" points to the contrast between everything human and God.'[1] This is perhaps an example of theistic and theological stress on the meaning of the word quite in keeping with a tradition in which men are conceived as born sinners.

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[1] Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha: As Legend and History*, 3rd edn., London, 1969, p. 208.

It is well known that Rudolf Otto used the word *heilige*, translated as holy, in the sense of 'non-rational' or numinous category peculiar to the sphere of religion. This category, he said, cannot be defined; it is ineffable and *sui generis*.[2] The manifestations of this category are 'seen' through religious experiences of diverse kinds. Otto's analysis of religious experiences dealing with the feelings of terror, fear, mystery and majesty, relates to the theistic concepts of the living God.

There are other factors also in the religious experience of human beings. The word holiness refers to goodness, moral perfection, purity and piety. The word sacred also suggests moral excellence and goodness. The notions of holiness, sanctity and moral goodness exist in non-theistic areas also. These areas are not secular or profane areas; they are *religious though not theistic*. Man has the capacity to become holy, sacred and morally perfectly good. Buddhism is not 'secular' in the sense of being non-religious. Trevor Ling says that Buddhism is certainly secular, if the sacred is defined in theistic terms.[3] Our suggestion is that the sacred is not necessarily theistic; the sacred is moral, good, religious. A person who is morally good is a sacred person, a holy person.

A large number of gods known to the Buddhist tradition are sacred beings, holy creatures, of recognized goodness and virtuous fame. They are held in regard precisely for their moral virtues. The deities or gods are not immortal; they are impermanent; but they are good creatures who have attained divine or godly existence through good and noble deeds. And as long as the merit of their good and moral *karmas* lasts, so long their holiness persists, so long they will continue to receive respect and homage from those that

[1] Gordon D. Kaufman, op. cit., p. 161.

[2] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. by John W. Harvey, New York, 1958, pp. 5-7.

[3] Trevor Ling, *The Buddha*, p. 120.

are less than gods. As long as they are deities, they are realities and their reality is felt by human beings. Gods are, like men and other beings, still in *saṃsāra* and therefore subject to the law of *karma* and rebirth. But they are on a higher plane of existence than that of men.

Gods in Buddhism, then, are sacred, though impermanent, realities. They represent an aspect of the sacred. They manifest themselves to human beings from time to time. This act of manifestation of the sacred is called hierophany. The sacred literature of the Buddhists is full of numerous kinds of hierophanies, but the modern champions of a 'rational' and 'scientific' Buddhism tend to ignore this aspect of Buddhist culture. Mircea Eliade is quite right when he observes that 'it could be said that the history of religions—from the most primitive to the most highly developed—is constituted by a number of hierophanies, by manifestations of sacred realities.'[1]

IMPORTANCE OF GODS: MORAL BEINGS

It is true that the deities (*devas, devatās*) in Buddhism are neither immortal nor omnipotent and certainly they cannot liberate beings from bondage, being themselves unfree and ignorant. Nevertheless, they are important members inhabiting different spheres or worlds (*lokas*) in the cosmos.

All the Buddhists do not seek Nirvāṇa. The vast majority of the Buddhists, including many of the monks, work for rebirth in a good state (*sugati*) or heaven (*svarga*). Gods live in heavens. Space does not permit us here to dwell over the classes of gods and types of heavens.[2] We want to stress here that gods are not insignificant or irrelevant to the Buddhist religiousness. The theoretical structure of Buddhist religiousness does not depend on gods, but the contours of an important part of Buddhist mythology of sacred values will be greatly mutilated if gods did not exist. The very fact that their existence is acknowledged is important.

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[1] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, trans. by Willard R. Trask, New York, 1959, p. 11; *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. by Rosemary Sheed, Cleveland and New York, 1968, ch. I.

[2] On gods in Buddhism see the following works: G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, London, 1960, I, pp. 1118-19; T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, New Delhi, 1975, p. 329; Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, Delhi, 1971, p. 270; Helmuth von Glasenapp, op. cit., pp. 19-34; Alicia Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation*, Tokyo, 1969, chs. 1-2; S.J. Tambiah, *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-east Thailand*, Cambridge, 1970, chs. 3 and 9; Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society*, London, 1971, chs. 3 and 4; Francis Story, *Gods and the Universe in Buddhist Perspective*, Kandy, 1972. Some of the classical sources throwing light on the origin, nature and function of gods are as follows: *Dīghanikāya*, *Brahmajālasutta*, *Kevaṭṭasutta*, *Mahāsamayasutta*, *Āṭānāṭiyasutta*; *Saṃyuttani-*

The Buddhist tradition recognizes three spheres or realms (*tridhātu*) in the universe; at the bottom is the realm of desire (*kāmaloka, kāmadhātu, kāmāvacara*); above it is the realm of form (*rūpa*); at the top is the formless (*arūpa*) realm. Within these three *lokas* live different classes of living beings. There are six classes or destinities or states (*gatis*) of these living beings: 1. *naraka*, beings in hells; 2. *tiryak*, animals; 3. *preta*, ghosts; 4. *asura*, non-gods or titans; 5. *manuṣya*, human beings; and 6. *deva*, gods.[1] Thus the

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kāya, ch. I on Devatā; *Visuddhimagga*, ch. VII, section 6 on recollection of gods; *Abhidharmakośa*, chs. I and II with *Sphuṭārthā* commentary. An insight into the position of gods in popular Buddhism may be gained by looking into the volumes of *The Monuments of Sāñchī*, ed. by John Marshall and A. Foucher, 3 vols., Delhi, 1940; Alexander Cunningham, *The Stūpa of Bharhut*, London, 1879; James Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, London, 1879; Benimadhab Barua, *Gayā and Buddha-Gayā*, 2 vols., Calcutta, 1931, 1934; James Burgess and James Fergusson, *Cave Temples of India*, Delhi, 1969; J. Ph. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathurā*, Allahabad, 1910; John Marshall, *Taxila*, 3 vols., London, 1951; G. Yazdani and others, *Ajaṇṭā*, 4 vols., Oxford, 1931-1946; A. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, New Delhi, 1978; Walter Eugene Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, New York, 1965; N.J. Krom, *Barabudur: Archaeological Description*, The Hague, 1927; A.K. Gordon, *The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*. New Delhi, 1978; Benoytosh Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 2nd edn., Calcutta, 1958.

The literary sources on the position of gods and goddesses of the Mahāyāna are numerous, voluminous and scattered. *The Mañjuśrīmūlakalpasūtra*, ed. by P.L. Vaidya, *BST*, no. 18, Darbhanga, 1964, is a representative text of mild and popular aspects of Tāntrika Buddhism. The *Avalokiteśvara-guṇa-kāraṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, ed. by P.L. Vaidya, *BST*, no. 17, Darbhanga, 1961, pp. 258-08, is a representative text of the popular Mahāyāna. Two of the most important Mahāyānasūtras which show the position and relevance of gods and demi-gods in Buddhism are the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, *BST*, no. 6, Darbhanga; Eng. trans. in *SBE*, XXI and the *Suvarṇaprabhāsasūtra*, ed. *BST*, no. 8, Darbhanga, 1967, and Eng. trans. in *SBB*, XXVII, 1970.

[1] In some Pali texts only five *gatis* are mentioned, *asura* state being omitted. Some authorities mentioning *gatis* or *yonis* are *Dīghanikāya*, III, pp. 203-04; *Majjhimanikāya*, I, p. 104; *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, X. 663; *Dharmasaṃgraha*, section 57.

gods enjoy the highest state of existence; they are most fortunate; next to them are human beings. The superiority of gods consists in that they have earned their position by virtuous and good deeds.

Among the six items recommended for regular recollection (*anusmṛti*) by every Buddhist are included gods (*devas*) also. The formula of the recollection of gods reads thus:

'There are the Four Great Kingly gods, there are the gods of (the heaven of) the Thirty-Three, there are the Yāma gods, the Tuṣita gods, the gods who delight in creating, the gods having power over the creations of others, the gods of Brahmā's retinue (*devā brahmakāyikā*), and gods higher than that. These gods were possessed of such faith (*saddhā*) that after dying here were born there; such faith exists in me too. Those gods were possessed of moral virtue, of learning, of renunciation . . . of wisdom such that after dying here they were born there. All these such qualities exist in me too.'[1]

This formula thus celebrates gods of different classes for their great moral and spiritual attainments; all gods were formerly men; because of their achievements in profound faith, morality, learning, renunciation or liberality, and wisdom, they were, after their death in the human world, reborn in different heavens. He who wishes similar state of existence must cultivate these virtues. The gods present examples of the fruition of the moral and spiritual efforts. Men who cannot work for Nirvāṇa must imitate the gods.

The above passage from a Pali canonical text is quoted in the *Vimuttimagga* as well as in the *Visuddhimagga*, the two greatest manuals of religious culture according to the Theravāda. According to the former, 'a man who practices the recollection of deities gains eight benefits; he increases five qualities, namely, confidence, virtue, learning, liberality and wisdom; he can gain that which heavenly beings desire and to which they are devoted; he is happy in the anticipation of the reward of merit; he honours this body; he is reverenced by heavenly beings. Through this, he is able to practice virtue and recollection of liberality also. He fares well and approaches the ambrosial.'[2] The latter adds that 'when a *bhikkhu* is devoted to this recollection of deities, he becomes dearly loved by deities. He obtains even greater fulness of faith. He has much happiness and gladness. And if he penetrates no higher, he is at least headed for a happy destiny.'[1]

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, III, p. 10 (*Mahānāmasutta*). My translation.

[2] *The Path of Freedom*, trans. from the Chinese by N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera, Colombo, 1961, p. 154.

The importance of gods in Buddhism is attested not only by Buddhist literature in Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese, but also by Buddhist archaeology and art. Emperor Aśoka cherished the epithet *devānaṃ-piya*, 'beloved of the gods.' The first Buddhist king of Sinhala or Sri Lanka, Tissa, also adopted this epithet. These great and devout Buddhist rulers did not aim at Liberation; they aimed at good rebirth (*sugati*, *svarga*). The numerous inscriptions at Sāñchī show that those who donated money for different parts of the *stūpa*, its railing etc., really looked to good state hereafter. The doctrine of 'good rebirth' is recorded in the Pali *Apadāna*[2] also. Emperor Aśoka says, in one of his Rock Edicts, that by promoting virtuous life and good conduct among his subjects, during his reign men in India who had been unassociated with the gods became associated with them.[3]

In the life of the Buddha, numerous episodes relate to the activities of gods. The Great God, Mahā-Brahmā, and Śakra (Sakka), the king among gods, i.e. Indra (Inda), figure repeatedly and prominently. The sacred mythology is so thoroughly interwoven in the fabric of the biography of Śākyamuni that Emile Senart, a French Indologist, in his *Essai sur la legende du Buddha*[4] dismissed the historicity of the Great Master as a solar myth. Although, Senart's work was based on the *Lalitavistara*, a Mahāyānian hagiography, the *Nidānakathā*, the Theravāda version of the story, also shows the important part played by the deities. A casual glance across the pages of the Pali Canon shows that the gods visited the Buddha more frequently than the contemporary kings of Magadha and Kosala.

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[1] *Visuddhimagga*, ed. by H.C. Warren and Dharmananda Kosambi, Cambridge (Mass.), 1950, pp. 185-86. Trans. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification*, Colombo, 1964, pp. 243-44.

[2] *Apadāna* (in *Khuddakanikāya*, VI) Nalanda edn., 1959, e.g., pp. 189-90. The line *duggatiṃ na-abhijānāmi buddha-pūjā idaṃ phalaṃ*, shows that the devotees honoured the Buddha with the express hope of avoiding evil destiny (*durgati*) and gaining heavenly life.

[3] *Minor Rock Edict* I in Radhagovinda Basak, *Aśokan Inscriptions*, Calcutta, 1959, p. 135.

[4] Paris, 1875.

Before His descent as Siddhārtha Gautama, the Bodhisattva was living among the gods of the Tuṣita Heaven; the gods requested Him to appear on the earth; on His birth, He was received by the gods; all the gods in all the heavens rejoiced over His birth among men. His renunciation of home-life was helped by the gods; on every occasion, the gods attend to His requirements. Among the many modern biographies of the Buddha, the one by A. Foucher, *La Vie du Bouddha*[1], though poor in doctrinal matters, is a classical work of its kind based on Buddhist literature and art. It depicts the life of the Buddha as it is viewed by the Buddhists.

The newly enlightened Buddha was requested by Great Brahmā to teach the Doctrine to the world, and the Enlightened One granted the request. The dialogue between the Buddha and Brahmā is a masterpiece of Buddhist sacred history.[2] The Buddhists pay their grateful homage to Great Brahmā for his kindly action. We have seen above (chapter V) that Brahmā is the Supreme Deity known to India's religious history. He becomes the instrument of a cosmic event in which the Transcendent One opens the doors to Immortal City.

A *sūtra* in the *Dīghanikāya* relates that the 'gods from the ten thousand world systems' often assembled at Kapilavastu to see the Blessed One and His company of perfected saints. The gods of the Pure Abodes also came there to see the Invincible Society (*aparājita saṃgha*).[3] Another *sūtra* records a meeting between the Buddha and Śakra (Indra). This god, who looms so mighty in the *Ṛgveda*, who is called 'the ruler of gods' in the Pali texts, comes to ask some questions to the Buddha. After getting answers to his questions, Indra realized the truth of the cessation of conditioned things, and paid homage to the Buddha.[4] A number of short discourses in the *Saṃyuttanikāya*[5] are addressed to individual gods by way of answers to their questions. Each of the gods comes to the place where the Buddha is staying, usually towards the end of the night, 'shedding radiance with his effulgent beauty' all over the place, and after saluting the Teacher of Gods and Men (*satthā deva-manussānaṃ*), asks questions. Buddha's answers to the gods' questions constitute some of the fundamentals of the Buddhist Doctrine.

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[1] Paris, 1949.

[2] *Mahāvagga (Vinayapiṭaka)*, Nalanda edn., pp. 6-10; Sanskrit version in the *Lalitavistara*, Darbhanga edn., pp. 28 7ff.

[3] *Dīghanikāya*, II, p. 189; Rhys Davids, *Dialogues*, part II, p. 284.

[4] *Dīghanikāya*, II, pp. 197-216.

[5] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, I, pp. 3ff.

The reader of the Mahāyānasūtras is impressed by the great number of different classes of gods who throng the assembly addressed by the Teacher of Gods and Men. In the assembly in which the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* was revealed, there were present, besides 1200 Arhats, 2000 monks, 6000 nuns, 80,000 Bodhisattvas, 15 virtuous men, and king Ajātaśatru of Magadha, the following gods, non-gods, and non-human beings: Śakra or Indra with 20,000 gods, Four Great Kingly Gods, the rulers of the four quarters, with 30,000 gods, Īśvara (possibly Viṣṇu) and Maheśvara, each followed by 30,000 gods, Brahmā and other gods of the Brahmaloka numbering 24,000, eight Nāga kings with many hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of Nāgas in their retinue; four Kinnara kings with many hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of Kinnaras; the four Gandharva gods with many hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of Gandharvas as their followers; the four Asura chiefs with many hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of Asuras in their retinue, and the four Garuḍa chiefs with many hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of Garuḍas as their followers. The universal Buddhist *saṃgha* thus consisted of Arhats, great disciples, monks as well as nuns, male and female lay-members, Bodhisattvas, gods, Nāgas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garuḍas, Kinnaras, Mahoragas, humans and non-humans.[1]

Gods are happy and virtuous beings. Their worship is not specifically recommended. Their protection, however, is eagerly sought: *rakkhantu sabba devatā*. They inspire good works and noble thoughts through their mighty potency. They are inferior to the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Arhats, but they are superior to human beings; by following in their footsteps men avoid evil and gain good.

BUDDHAHOOD AS GODHEAD

It has been suggested that the word God is used in three different senses: as God the creator and lord of the universe; as Gods or angels; and as 'Godhead.' We have seen above the Buddhist attitude to God-creator and to gods or divine beings living in heavens. We have to consider briefly whether it is possible to say that the Buddhists recognize 'Godhead' as the impersonal reality in spite of their clear rejection of God-creator.

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[1] *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, Darbhanga edn., pp. 1-3.

Edward Conze, an earnest Buddhist and a high authority on Buddhist thought and literature, has expressed the following view:

'When we compare the attributes of the Godhead as they are understood by the more mystical tradition of Christian thought, with those of Nirvāṇa, we find almost no difference at all. It is indeed true that Nirvāṇa has no cosmological functions, that this is not God's world, but a world made by our own greed and stupidity. It is indeed true that through their attitude the Buddhists express a more radical rejection of the world in all its aspects than we find among many Christians. At the same time, they are spared a number of awkward theological riddles and have not been under the necessity to combine, for instance, the assumption of an omnipotent and all loving God with the existence of a great deal of suffering and muddle in this world . . .

'But on the other hand, we are told the Nirvāṇa is permanent, stable, imperishable, immovable, ageless, deathless, unborn, and unbecome, that it is power; bliss and happiness, the secure refuge, the shelter, and the place of unassailable safety; that it is the real Truth and the Supreme Reality; that it is the Good, the supreme goal and the one and only consummation of our life, the eternal, hidden and incomprehensible Peace.

'Similarly, the Buddha who is, as it were, the personal embodiment of Nirvāṇa, becomes the object of all those emotions which we are wont to call religious.'[1]

All the attributes of Nirvāṇa, mentioned above, are found in the scriptures and they are well known.[2] The point to be discussed is concerning the Buddha: meaning, nature and function of embodied Buddhahood in the life of the Buddhists.

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[1] Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, New York, 1959, pp. 39-40.

[2] See Rhys Davids and Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, pp. 362-65; Rune Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, London, 1969; Bhikshu Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, pp. 55-93; Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 70-79. The Absolutist conception of Nirvāṇa will be seen in the *Madhyamaka-śāstra*, chapter 25, with *Prasannapadā* commentary. Stcherbatsky's English trans. of this chapter, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, Varanasi, n.d. may be studied in the light of J.W. de Jong's criticism of Stcherbatsky's interpretation of *śūnya* as 'relative': 'The Problem of the Absolute in the Madhyamaka School' in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 2, 1972, pp. 1-6.

T.R.V. Murti has asserted that 'Buddha is Bhagavān, God, endowed as he is with power and perfection. He possesses, in entirety, all power, splendour, fame, wealth, knowledge and act.'[1] This view is based on a verse which is quoted from the *Buddhabhūmiśāstra* by Haribhadra (9th cent. AD) in his *Ālokavyākhyā*. The text of the verse, however, does not warrant us in employing the word 'God.' I may offer the following literal translation: 'According to the scripture, the Glorious One has the following six (things) in entirety: supremacy, beauty, honour, excellence, wisdom, and activity.'[2]

The modern Hindus usually use the Hindi (Sanskrit) word Bhagavān as an equivalent of the English word God. This may be right in theistic systems such as Vaiṣṇavism in which Viṣṇu-Bhagavān is believed to be God-creator. But in Buddhism, Bhagavān has quite a different meaning. Sangharakshita says that 'the Buddha of the Mahāyāna might be described as the God who did not create the universe.'[3] But the Hindu scholars of Buddhism are wont to call Buddha Īśvara or God. We have seen above how fervently Vivekananda describes the Buddha as God's Avatāra, as God Himself. T.R.V. Murti also refers to the Buddha as Īśvara. Conscious of the difference between the cosmic functions of Īśvara and Tathāgata, he is constrained to note that 'in Buddhism karma, takes the place of Īśvara in this regard.' He comes very near to the position of Vivekananda in his enthusiastic description of 'God in Buddhism':

'The most characteristic feature of God in Buddhism is the *mahākaruṇā* that is prepared for any sacrifice for any one and for all time. This active and unceasing interest and effort for the welfare and final release of all beings makes the Tathāgata a very loving and lovable God. It is easily one of the purest and most exalted conceptions of God-head. Not that Īśvara is not conceived as benign and loving, but that the ideal of *mahākaruṇā* and *sarvamukti* is not so intensely and intimately expressed as in Buddhism.'[4] How the

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[1] T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, 1960, p. 280, and fn. 1.

[2] See *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* with *Ālokavyākhyā* ed., *BST*, no. 4, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 272:

aiśvarasya samagrasya rūpasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ |
jñānasyātha prayatnasya ṣaṇṇaṃ bhaga iti śrutiḥ. ||

[3] Sangharakshita, *The Tree Jewels*, pp. 140-41.

[4] T.R.V. Murti, op. cit., pp. 288-89.

Buddha who is neither the creator nor destroyer of the world can be called Īśvara or God is a question which does not concern him.

The Buddha as Avatāra

This Hinduistic view of the Buddha as God or Īśvara is founded, not on a correct understanding of the Buddhology of the Pali Canon or the Mahāyānasūtras, but on the authority of medieval Brahmanical texts, especially the Purāṇas.

The doctrine of *avatāra* is, of course, of Buddhist origin. The earliest Buddhists had believed that Siddhārtha Gautama had gone through many *avatāras* as a Bodhisattva before He attained Buddhahood as Śākyamuni. Apart from the *Jātaka* book, there is evidence for this belief in the Pali Canon. At one place, it is said that the Bodhisattva had been Mahā-Brahmā once, and Śakra not less than thirty-six times, and so on.[1] The word *avakrānti* (descent) occurs in a Bharhut inscription of second century BC which refers to the Bodhisattva's 'descent' symbolically depicted on a stone sculpture.[2] The earliest Brahmanical evidence for the theory of descent or *avatāra* of God is to be found in the *Bhagavadgītā*[3] which is later than the Pali Canon and the Brahmi inscriptions of Bharhut.

A seventh century AD epigraph on the lintel over the statue of Śaṃkara-Nārāyaṇa in the Varāha-Perumal temple at Mahabalipuram refers to ten *avatāras* of Viṣṇu; the list has Buddha as the 9th *avatāra*.[4] This inscription is perhaps based on the *Varāha-Purāṇa*, which ennumerates the ten *avatāras* in the following order: Matsya (Fish), Kūrma (Tortoise), Varāha (Boar), Narasiṃha (Man-Lion), Vāmana (Dwarf), Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Kalkin. The same order is found in the *Matsya-Purāṇa*.[5] The Buddha Avatāra is mentioned in the *Agni-Purāṇa*, the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, the *Daśāvatāra-carita* of Kṣemendra and the *Gītagovinda* of Jayadeva;[1] a rock-cut temple at Ellorā is known as the *daśāvatāra* cave. Among other things the *Varāha-Purāṇa*[2] says that he who desires a handsome body must worship the Buddha.

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, III, p. 221.

[2] N.G. Majumdar, *A Guide to the Sculptures in the Indian Museum* (Calcutta), part I, Delhi, 1937, p. 87: *bhagavato ukraṃti*.

[3] IV. 6-8.

[4] H. Krishna Sastri, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, no. 26, pp. 5ff.

[5] *Varāha-Purāṇa*, 4.2; *Matsya-Purāṇa*, 285. 6-7:
matsyaḥ kūrmo varāhaśca nārasiṃho 'tha vāmanaḥ |
rāmo-rāmaśca kṛṣṇaśca buddhaḥ kalki ca te daśa ||

The Brahmanical admission and assimilation of Buddhāvatāra is often cited as an example of Brahmanical Hindu tolerance and broad-minded attitude. Whatever be the merits of this phenomenon, the Buddhists have not found it acceptable. They feel that it does no particular honour to the Great Compassionate Master (*mahākāruṇiko nātho*) to include Him in the list in which diverse kinds of human beings and beasts find a similar position. The nature and function of an *avatāra* as conceived in the *Bhagavadgītā* and the Purāṇas have no correspondence with the nature and function of the Buddha according to the Buddhist Tradition. What correspondence or similarity exists, say, between the life and activities of Sri Kṛṣṇa,[3] the eighth *avatāra*, and Tathāgata? The Buddha cannot be compared with any of the 'ten' or 'twenty-two' or 'thirty-three' *avatāras* mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas. A historian of religion may say that the declaration of the Buddha as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu greatly undermined the historic character of Śākyamuni. From the standpoint of the religious history of the Buddhist community in India, the *avatāra* 'policy' of the Bhāgavata priests practically took away the very foundation-stone of Bauddha-Dharma. Finally, let it be added here, even at the cost of repetition, that the *avatāra* value of Vaiṣṇavaite Buddha has been seriously impaired by the Brahmanical myth of 'Mahā-moha' or 'Māyā-moha' published in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.

On the other hand, the reality of God's *avatāra* seems to be denied by so great a Brahmanical thinker as Śaṃkara. In his rather inadequate comment on the *Bhagavadgītā*,[4] he says that Vāsudeva

[1] *Agni-Purāṇa*, 49.8; *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, 57.4 describes Buddha as the *Father of the World* (*pitā eva jagato bhavati buddhaḥ*); *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, X. 40.22; also I.3, I.25 where Buddha figures as one of twenty-two *avatāras*; *Daśāvatāra-carita*, I.2; *Gītagovinda*, I.13.

[2] 48.22.

[3] On Kṛṣṇa I refer to E.W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, Varanasi, 1968, pp. 213ff.; D.D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*, pp. 20ff. *Krishna, Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*, ed. by Milton Singer, Chicago, 1968; W.G. Archer. *The Loves of Krishna*, New York, n.d.

[4] IV. 6-8.

or the Self *appears* as born and embodied only through his *māyā* and not in reality. Not only the Advaitins deny the reality of *avatāra*, the Śaivas and the Śāktas do not accept the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as authorities. Thus it may be said that only a few, especially the Vaiṣṇavaite Hindus, believe in the doctrine of God's *avatāra*. As for the Buddhāvatāra, I think Geoffrey Parrinder is right in saying that 'The Buddha is not an Incarnation or Avatār of God or any other superior being.'[1]

Nevertheless, the Brahmanical Hindus are wont to view the Buddha as some kind of God. Mādhavācārya (14th century AD) quotes the *Viveka-vilāsa* in which we are told that 'The Buddha is the God (*deva*) of the Buddhists, the universe (for them) is momentary' (*bauddhānāṃ sugato devo viśvaṃ ca kṣaṇabhaṅguraṃ*).[2] Here we are possibly not wrong in translating the word *deva* as 'God' because it is used by a theistic author; he is, however, careful not to hasten to say that this Deva is the creator of the universe. Instead he rightly presents the Buddhist view that the universe is impermanent.

It is also noteworthy that the author of the *Viveka-vilāsa* does not say that Buddha is the Buddhists's Īśvara. 'Buddha is not an Īśvara ruling the world, not a future lord of the cosmos; neither is he a human incarnation of an eternal creator and ruler. Though the Hindus have conceived him to be an avatāra of Viṣṇu, this is purely a brahmanical speculation which has never been acceptable to Buddhists. Neither is Buddha one of the Buddhist *devas* which Buddha himself is said to have denied.'[3]

THE BUDDHA AS A HUMAN BEING

Some Theravāda Buddhist writers have insisted that the Buddha was nothing but 'a human being.' This is the opinion of Walpola Rahula, Piyadassi Thera and H. Saddhatissa.[4] This opinion, however, is quite misleading. This view is based on the rationalist bias of the scholars of Anglo-German School of Pali Studies rather than on the Theravāda scriptures. Secondly, this view is contradicted by several passages in the Pali Canon. Thirdly, not all Theravādin Buddhists accept this view. Finally, this is the view of a few representatives only of one sect of the Buddhist Tradition. The Mahāsāṃghika, the Sarvāstivādin, the Mādhyamika, the Vijñānavādin, and the Nyāyavādin Buddhists do not accept such a view and they have criticized this view of the Theravādins.

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[1] Geoffrey Parrinder, *Avatar and Incarnation*, London, 1970, p. 180.

[2] *Sarvadarśana-saṃgraha*, Poona, 1966, p. 21.

[3] Helmuth von Glasenapp, op. cit., p. 64.

[4] Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, p. 1; Piyadassi Thera, *The Buddha's Ancient Path*, p. 23; H. Saddhatissa, *The Buddha's Way*, London, 1971, p. 1.

K.N. Jayatilleke, a most outstanding Buddhist scholar of the Theravāda tradition, while admitting that the Buddha is not conceived of as a Creator-God either in the Theravāda or in the Mahāyāna, adds that 'this does not mean that the Buddha was a mere human being in either the Theravāda or Mahāyāna schools of thought.'[1]

We have noted in chapter I the message of the *Doṇasutta* in which Śākyamuni says that *He is neither a god nor a man.* Mrs. Rhys Davids, one of the noted teachers of the rationalist approach to the Pali Canon, wants us to believe that the Buddha was not called Buddha in His own day. True to her ingenious rationalism, she thought that 'the Wise Man' is the proper translation of Buddha.[2] Her translation of Tathāgata as 'Wayfarer' suggests that she had misunderstood the meaning and end of Buddhism.

The humanity or the historicity of the man Siddhārtha Gautama is not denied nor doubted. What we want to stress is the fact that that man, by attaining Buddhahood, had transcended human nature, become transhistorical, and was called the Transcendent One (*tathāgata*). To say that the Buddha was only a human being is not only clearly wrong but blasphemous too.

It is out of a sense of total commitment and response, out of a sense of ultimacy and transcendental concern, that a Buddhist says: *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.* Can he say: *manussaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi,* 'I go for refuge to man?' No. A Buddhist goes for refuge to Buddha, not to man. To say that the Buddha was only a man is to deny that He was Buddha. This, of course, is not the intention of those who insist on saying that the Buddha was only a human being, and they are certainly not guilty of writing contemptuously about the Teacher whose disciples they are. It is possibly their desire to dissociate all theistic notions from the Buddha that leads them to assume a position which is contrary to their scriptures. There is not a single passage in the Pali Canon which says that the Buddha was merely a human being, 'pure and simple.' On the contrary, numerous passages declare in clear words that the Tathāgata is more than a Great Man (*mahāpurisa*), more than the Best Man (*uttamapurisa*), and more than the excellent among the Gods and Men.[1]

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[1] K.N. Jayatilleke, *Facts of Buddhist Thought*, p. 18.

[2] *The Book of the Gradual Savings*, II, introduction, p. vi. The dialogue between the brāhmaṇa Doṇa and the Buddha is translated on ibid, pp. 43-45. See the Hindi translation by Anand Kausalyayan, *Aṅguttaranikāya*, part II, Calcutta, n.d., pp. 38-40 and p. 14 note 1 above. I.B. Horner's trans. in *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*, ed. by E. Conze, New York, 1954.

Gods and men are unfree and mortal, whereas Buddha is Freed and Deathless. He who is called the Infinite;[2] the Unfathomable;[3] He who is the Giver of Immortality;[4] He who is Unthinkable (*acintiyo*), whose Sphere is Unthinkable,[5] whose Field is Limitless,[6] and so on; such a Being cannot be thought of as a mere man. 'The Transcendent One is profound, immeasurable, and unfathomable, like the great ocean.'[7]

The number of passages with similar import can be multiplied greatly. These statements in the canonical texts of the Theravāda set aside and invalidate the ideology underlying the modern myth of 'Gotama the Man'; the Buddhology of the Pali Canon also contradicts the popular but meaningless modern notion that the 'deification' of the historic Buddha took place in later Buddhism. There is neither deification nor dehumanization of the Buddha; from the very beginning, that is, as early as the oldest extant texts, the Buddha is conceived of *neither as a man nor as a god; either word is demeaning and opposed to the meaning of Buddha.* Of all the names and epithets of Buddha, possibly the most meaningful and appropriate is Tathāgata; in our opinion, the most appropriate English translation of this word is the Transcendent One.

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, II. 11.

[2] ibid, II. 77, *appamāṇo buddho*.

[3] ibid, I. 210, *appameyo*.

[4] ibid, IV. 310, *amatassa dātā*.

[5] *Buddha-visayo acinteyyo*, ibid, II. 84; cp. *Therāpadāna*, 1.1.82; *Mahāvaṃsa*, XVII. 56; *Vajracchedikā*, ed. Conze, SOR, XIII, 1957, p. 46.

[6] *Dhammapada*, 179-180, *taṃ buddhaṃ-anantagocaraṃ*.

[7] *Tathāgato gambhīro appameyo duppariyogāho seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo*, *Majjhimanikāya*, II, 182.

We have seen that Buddha is neither God, nor Avatāra, nor even Man. What is Buddha then? What does this word or symbol refer to? Is it possible to conceptualize and discuss Buddhahood? How do the Buddhists conceive of Buddhahood? What is the significance of the historic Buddha? What are the perfections, achievements, powers and attributes of Buddha? It is in the answers to these questions that the reader should look for God's alternative in Buddhism.

The limits of space at our disposal here prevent us from answering all these Buddhological questions in detail. In the following section of this chapter we will introduce to the reader some of the most important materials on Buddhology, containing the basic Buddhist conceptions about Tathāgata.

THE TRANSHISTORICAL BODHISATTVA

Buddhology transcends the limits of Buddhist historiography. The Buddhist tradition traces the evolution of the Bodhisattva's holy career to a transhistorical epoch. Before He became known as Siddhārtha Gautama in history, this Being had been in *saṃsāra* for a very long period of time. Buddhism teaches rebirth. The continuity of changing stream of consciousness through a long series of embodied existences is taken for granted. The phenomenon of rebirth or the cycle of existence is called *saṃsāra* which includes the three realms (*tridhātu*). The beginnings of *saṃsāra* or the first point in the process of *avidyā* and bondage is unperceived and unthinkable. But its termination point is possible and realizable. This end point of *saṃsāra* leads to deliverance and opens the door to the Deathlessness. The foundations for this culminating achievement had been laid by the Bodhisattva in a very distant past. This period of preparation for the attainment of Buddhahood is known as the period of His Bodhisattva career; it came to its successful end when Siddhārtha Gautama became Buddha in the sixth century BC.

A Bodhisattva is a being whose will or intention is fixed on Bodhi,[1] who has developed the thought of Bodhi and who is determined to attain it. Buddhology in the sense of study of the life, person and activities of the Buddha, therefore, takes note of the existence of Sumedha, who in the time of Dīpaṃkara Buddha, had embraced the

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[1] *Bodhicaryāvatāra-Pañjikā*, *BST*, no. 12, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 200.

Bodhisattva career. The religious efforts of Bodhisattva Siddhārtha Gautama were thus as old as the world-epoch of Dīpaṃkara Buddha. It was after practising all the great moral and spiritual qualities (*pāramitās*) to their perfection, that this Great Being (*mahāsattva*), the Bodhisattva on the threshold of Buddhahood, was dwelling among the gods of the Satisfied Realm (*tuṣita-devaloka*). It was from there that He descended into the womb of Māyādevī and was born for the last time in the Lumbini Garden.

THE HISTORICAL BODHISATTVA

Historical Buddhology starts with the birth in human form of the Bodhisattva Siddhārtha. He was not a Buddha when He was born as Siddhārtha so that it is incorrect to say that 'the Buddha was born.' The historicity of Siddhārtha Gautama is an acknowledged fact. He was born in 566 BC (according to a tradition current in Sri Lanka, Burma, etc., in 624 BC). His nativity spot, according to an Aśokan monolithic pillar with an inscription dating from about 260 BC, is known to us to be at Lumbini Garden on the Indo-Nepal border. His father, Śuddhodana of the Śākya clan, was the President of the Republic of Śākyas with their headquarters at Kapilvastu in Deoria District of U.P. The Bodhisattva's mother, Māyādevī, died shortly after His birth; He was reared by His aunt, Mahāprajāpatī. There are literary traditions according to which the art of writing was known in India in the sixth century BC. It is to be believed that the Bodhisattva received the best education available to princes and the sons of nobility. He was married to Yaśodharā also called Gopā and had a son named Rāhula. He renounced householder's life and all those possessions and pleasures in the prime of life and became an ascetic without the permission of His father. He then studied under two *śramaṇa* philosophers, Ārāḍa Kālāma and Rudraka Rāmaputra, but soon renounced their teachings because they did not lead to final deliverance. He then practised some of the extreme forms of asceticism but later on abandoned asceticism also on finding that that path did not result in eradicating the ills and passions. Finally, He decided to follow the middle path to the goal which comprised a morally regulated moderation in life, meditations and analytical wisdom.

Two facts need a brief comment. The Bodhisattva's rejection of the teachings of His two *śramaṇa* teachers was based on the consideration that they did not promote 'aversion, dispassion, cessation, tranquillity, super-knowledge, enlightenment and Nirvāṇa.' These seven words indicate principal features of the supreme goal He was seeking. His rejection of mortifying austerities meant that the goal was of the nature of happiness and not of the nature of physical and mental disease which followed in the wake of extreme asceticism.

At the end of six years of wanderings, studies and austerities, the Bodhisattva decided to sit under a *pīpala* tree with the firm resolve to go beyond the *saṃsāra.* Here, at the foot of a tree in what is called Bodhagayā, the Bodhisattva removed the final obstacle on the way to the goal. Victory over the forces of Māra—doubt, wavering, attachment, craving, pleasure, fear, ignorance, and the habit-hardened bias for self-existence—was achieved through the force of holy merits heaped during the course of countless former existences. It was not through divine grace or angelic support but through the fruition of His sustained efforts, in harmony with the Dharma, that the Bodhisattva now became ready for final Enlightenment.

THE HISTORICAL BUDDHA

On the evening of the full moon in the month of Vaiśākha (May), the Bodhisattva sat in meditation and ascended the four stages of meditation one by one and consolidated the stage of pure consciousness and equanimity. All these stages of *dhyāna* are characterized by concentration and direct perception of the meditating sage (*yogi-pratyakṣa*); they yield an insight which is six-fold. The Bodhisattva thus attained the six superknowledges (*abhijñās*): yogic powers (*ṛddhis*), the divine ear (*divyaśrota*), knowledge of other's minds (*paracitta-jñāna*), memory of former existences (*pūrvanivāsānusmṛti*), the divine eye (*divyacakṣu*), and the knowledge of the destruction of the *āsravas* (flowing impulses, outflows, cankers, biases or defilements). The ancient texts differ in enumerating the order of attainment of these superknowledges.[1]

During the first watch of the night, He acquired the knowledge of His innumerable former existences one by one. During the second watch He acquired the vision of the birth, death and rebirth of all the beings living in all the realms. With this divine eye He surveyed the entire universe which, according to one text, appeared to Him as in a spotless mirror. He saw that good deeds lead to happy states and bad deeds to miserable states of life. During the third watch He perceived the utter destruction of *āsravas* leading to the sensual experience (*kāma*), conditioned life (*bhava*) and erroneous opinions (*dṛṣṭi*). He realized the Four Holy Truths, the Law of Conditioned Coproduction with its twelve preconditions. He realized the ultimate ineffable Truth. He had the supreme conviction of Liberation. 'In me Liberated arose knowledge of my Liberation. I realized that rebirth has been destroyed, the holy life has been lived, the task has been accomplished, there is nothing (to be done) after this.' Toward the end of the night, at dawn, He had become a Supreme Buddha. The account of the Buddha's activities from the time of Enlightenment till the time of His disappearance from this earth is well known and the interested reader is advised to read the modern works noted below.[1]

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[1] Some of the main sources describing the Enlightenment are the *Majjhimanikāya*, (*Bhayabheravasutta* and *Mahāsaccakasutta*), I, pp. 23ff, 291ff; *Nidānakathā*, paragraphs 172-73; *Lalitavistara, BST*, no. 1, ch. 22, pp. 250ff, *Buddhacarita*, ch. XIV.

So far we have deliberately kept silence about the myths and legends which fill so many pages of the ancient biographies of the Buddha. These myths and legends portray the birth and enlightenment of the Bodhisattva as cosmic events of supreme magnitude and significance. Oldenberg refers to them as 'wild and coarse tableau of miracles and sensations' while Sangharakshita considers them as constituting 'spiritual-cum-metaphysical commentary of the highest value' on the actual episodes of the biography. While we appreciate the rationalistic and historical research of T.W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg and others in their following, we have to observe that they failed to know the Buddha of the Buddhist religiousness in their enthusiasm to portray the Buddha of history. It is the task of Buddhology to study the meaning of the historic Buddha in the light of Buddhist notions of Buddhahood and its human embodiment. We shall begin with a review of the meaning of Enlightenment or Buddhahood as revealed to us by the historical Buddha.

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[1] Rāhula Sāṃkṛityāyana, *Buddhacaryā* (in Hindi), Sarnath, 1952; E.H. Brewster, *The Life of Gotama the Buddha*, London, 1926; Sangharakshita, *The Three Jewels*, chs. 1-4; H. Oldenberg, op. cit., pp. 113-03; Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, 3rd edn., London, 1949; W.W. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, Varanasi, 1972; Alfred Foucher, *La Vie du Bouddha*, Paris, 1949; an abridged and somewhat faulty English trans. of it is published from Middletown, Conn., 1963.

THE MEANING OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The heart of Bodhi or the essence of Enlightenment is so radically different from all that we human beings see, feel, know and imagine that it is futile to attempt a discussion of its meaning. The nature of Truth or Reality, the realization of which transformed Siddhārtha Gautama into an Omniscient Being, cannot be understood by the ignorant and the fettered human beings. Its unutterability is suggested by the noble silence to which Vimalakīrti resorted when asked to define its nature. However, the Buddha's teaching was derived from His Enlightenment-Experience, and what He taught to His disciples formed an intelligible and communicable part or aspect of that Enlightenment. A student of Buddhology can comprehend something of Buddhahood to this extent only conditioned as its meaning is by linguistic and historical contingencies of his existential situation. In order to know and comprehend Buddhahood in its entirety one has to become a Buddha.

The one word or symbol which sums up the essential meaning of Enlightenment is *pratītya-samutpāda*, 'Conditioned Coproduction'. A Buddha is a Buddha, i.e. 'knower', because He has the knowledge (*bodhi*) of *pratītya-samutpāda*. The mystery of the universe, the origin and the end of all beings and things, is revealed by the knowledge of this one principle. Universal compassion for the ignorant and suffering beings and attainment of Peace that transcends understanding follow the awakening that consists in the mastery of this principle. We cannot exaggerate its importance; all the major schools, the Theravāda, the Sarvāstivāda, the Madhyamaka and that of the Logicians, are united in stressing the importance of this principle.

There is a tradition according to which the Buddha at first reflected on the desirability of expounding the principle in view of its subtlety and depth and in view of the spiritual darkness in which humanity has been enveloped. In several versions of the Buddhist canon we read the following passage:

'Then, monks, I thought, "Now I have gained the Dharma (the Truth) which is profound, difficult to perceive, difficult to know, quiescent, transcendent, beyond the sphere of discursive reasoning, subtle, to be known by the wise. This mankind is wholly intent on its attachments, and takes delight in and is pleased by them. For this mankind wholly intent on its attachments, it is difficult to see this principle, namely, this conditionedness, the Conditioned Coproduction. This principle also is difficult to see, namely the pacification of all compounded things, the detachment from all clinging to embodied existence, the destruction of craving, the negation of passion, cessation, Nirvāṇa.'[1] Out of supreme compassion, the Buddha finally decided to teach this principle.

When Śāriputra, then a wandering recluse of a different religious sect, asked his friend Aśvajit, who had become one of the first five pupils of the Great Master, to sum up the essential Teaching of his Teacher, Aśvajit produced a classic verse in reply which has gone down in history as the best memorable summary of the Buddha's insight and knowledge. That verse means: 'The Transcendent One has revealed the origin as well as the end of all those things that are produced by causes; this is the teaching of the Great Sage.'[2]

The twelve preconditions (*pratyayas*) or so-called links in the chain of causation are well-known and we pass over them here.[3] The emphasis is on the origin and cessation of suffering or *duḥkha*; the Buddha claimed to know the origin and cessation of the whole lot of suffering and its concomitants. 'The origin, the origin: thus as I duly reflected on these things unheard before, vision arose, knowledge arose, full knowledge arose, understanding arose, light arose'; 'the cessation, cessation: thus as I duly reflected on these things unheard before, vision arose, knowledge arose, full knowledge arose, understanding arose, light arose.'[4]

The knowledge (*bodhi*) of the principle of Conditioned Coproduction which governs the whole universe is thus called the Dharma in the first passage; here its revelation is referred to as Vision (*cakṣu*), Knowledge (*jñāna*), Wisdom (*prajñā*), Understanding (*vidyā*) and Light (*āloka*). These are synonyms of Enlightenment.

Although Enlightenment is conceived of as much more than this vision of the nature and functioning of the universe, this latter constituted a most vital strand of the saving wisdom. The principle of Conditioned Coproduction is identified with the Dharma (Truth, Reality, Law). A *sutta* in the Pali Canon reports that he who sees the Conditioned Coproduction sees the Dharma; he who sees the Dharma sees the Conditioned Coproduction.[1] Another Pali *sutta* identifies the Dharma with Buddha. The Buddha told a monk named Vakkali, who wanted to see the person of the Transcendent One, the following: 'What is there, Vakkali, in this evil body? He who sees the Dharma sees Me.'[2] In this passage a clear distinction is made between the psycho-physical frame or body of Gautama the Man and the transcendental Truth that was manifested through Him. He was the personal embodiment, as it were, of the Dharma which, however, transcended His physical body. It is in the same sense that a Sanskrit *sūtra* tells us the following: *yo bhikṣavaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ paśyati; sa dharmaṃ paśyati; yo dharmaṃ paśyati sa buddhaṃ paśyati;* 'Monks, whoso sees Conditioned Coproduction, he sees the Dharma; whoso sees the Dharma, he sees Buddha.'[3]

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[1] *Mahāvagga*, Nalanda edn , p. 6. My translation. See the Sanskrit versions in the *Lalitavistara*, Darbhanga edn., p. 289; *Mahāvastu*, English trans. by J.J. Jones, *SBB*, XIX, London, 1956, III, pp. 302-03; *Prasannapadā*, edn. in *BST*, no. 10, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 217.

[2] *Mahāvagga*, p. 40. My translation.

[3] The doctrine of *pratītya-samutpāda* is found explained in numerous Pali and Sanskrit texts as well as in almost all standard modern works on Buddhist thought. I may refer to the *Visuddhimagga*, ch. XVII, pp. 440f. Translation in Ñāṇamoli op. cit., pp. 592ff; Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 144-58.

[4] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, Nalanda edn., II, pp. 11-12; trans. by Edward J. Thomas in *Early Buddhist Scriptures*, London, 1935, pp. 120-21.

Realization of the Conditioned Coproduction, the Law that relentlessly operates in the universe, is thus the principal feature of the supreme awakening which results in deliverance from *saṃsāra*. This is stated in another Pali *sutta*: 'This Conditioned Coproduction is profound, Ānanda, and it looks profound too. And, Ānanda, it is through not knowing, through not penetrating this Dharma, that the mankind has become like to an entangled warp, a knotted ball of thread, or has become like to a muñja-grass and rushes, and finds no way out of the stream of rebirths, downfall, miserable states and hells.'[4]

The greatest master of the Mahāyāna thought, Nāgārjuna (1st century AD) pays homage to the Buddha as the Teacher of Conditioned Coproduction: 'I salute the perfect Buddha, the Best among the teachers, who has taught Conditioned Coproduction which is the Quiescence of the phenomenon, the Good.'[5]

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[1] *Majjhimanikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, p. 241.

[2] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, II, pp. 340-41.

[3] *Śālistambasūtra*, second paragraph (ed. in *Mahāyānasūtra-saṃgraha*, part I, *BST*, no. 17, Darbhanga, 1961), p. 100.

[4] *Dīghanikāya*, II, p. 44. My translation.

[5] *Madhyamakaśāstra*, *BST*, no. 10, Darbhanga, 1960, I. 2, p. 4. Stcherbatsky translates *pratītyasamutpāda* as 'Relativity'; Ganganatha Jha translates 'Wheel of

Śāntarakṣita (8th century AD) likewise, has paid homage to the Buddha as the Expounder of this Principle. In the opening six verses of his *magnum opus*, the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, he refers to the main philosophical and Buddhological ideas implied in the Buddha's revelation of this Truth. These verses deserve a more serious attention of Buddhist scholars than has been accorded to them hithertofore. These verses, in Gaṅgānātha Jhā's translation, are as follows:

'This *Tattvasaṅgraha*, Compendium of True Doctrines, is being composed after bowing to that Omniscient Person, the greatest of expounders, who, with a view to bringing about the welfare of the world, propounded the Doctrine of the Wheel of Intervolved Causation, Independently of any self-sufficient revelation, supreme mercy having entered His very soul through long innumerable cycles (5-6). The Wheel of Causation is free from all notions of the functions of any such cause as Primordial Matter, God, both of these (Primordial Matter and God), Soul, and such other entities; it is mobile; it is the basis of all such notions as *karma* (actions, good and bad), the fruits of acts, the connection between these two (1). It is devoid of all such concepts as Quality, Substance, Movement, Universal, Inherence, and so on; it is amenable to words and cognitions only in an assumed (superimposed) form (2). It is definitely cognized by means of two clearly defined Means of Cognition; it is not mixed up with the nature of anything else, even in the slightest degree (3). It admits of no translocation; it is without beginning and without end; it is like a reflected image and other such things; it is absolutely free from the whole lot of fantasies, it has not been comprehended by others (4).'[1]

This masterly translation of difficult Sanskrit verses needs only a short comment. The first verse of the original text, translated by Jha after fifth and six verses, rejects the doctrines of Prakṛti, Lord (Īśa), both (i.e. Prakṛti and Puruṣa), Self (*ātman*) etc. The Buddha discovered that these concepts have no reality behind them which can be the ground of the universe. The Reality which regulates the universe is not fixed but kinetic or dynamic (*calam*); it is the foundation of the law of *karma* and its fruition. The first half of the

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Intervolved Causation,' while other modern writers seem to prefer 'Dependent Origination' or 'Conditioned Genesis.'

[1] *The Tattvasaṅgraha* of Śāntarakṣita, with the commentary of Kamalaśīla, trans. into English by Ganganatha Jha, Baroda, 1937, I, pp. 1-2.

second verse refutes the Naiyāyika concepts of categories; the second half of this verse indicates that the principle of Conditioned Coproduction is devoid of such categories, and its range is open to words and linguistic formulations only in a superimposed form. In reality it is beyond words and concepts. The phrase 'like a reflected image etc.' (*pratibimbādisannibhaṃ*), in verse 4 reinforces the meaning of *āropitākāra*, superimposed form. The third verse stresses the uniqueness of the Dharma in that it is not mixed up in the slightest degree with anything foreign to it, and that it is endowed with clear marks to be ascertained by two means of proof (*pramāṇa*) namely, perception and inference.[1] It is without transition, without origin, and without end; it is entirely free from the whole multitude of thought-constructs (*prapañca*), and not realized by other philosophers.

The knowledge of this principle, says the commentator Kamalaśīla, is peculiar (*āveṇika*) to the Blessed One; Viṣṇu (Hari), Śiva (Hara) and Brahmā (Hiraṇyagarbha) do not possess this knowledge.[2] In the fifth verse, the author states that the Buddha's revelation of this principle was not based on the Vedas which are held (by the Vaidikas, the Hindus) as 'self-sufficient-proof,' but on His own Vision. He taught it for the benefit of the world out of great compassion (*mahādayā*, *mahākaruṇā*). The Blessed One had not only Supreme Wisdom (*sambodhi*) but also Great Compassion. These two perfections are inseparable from Buddhahood. The Bodhisattva became Buddha of His own efforts; He had the vision of Truth for the benefit of the world; this vision or revelation had both supreme wisdom as well as supreme compassion. The revelation was the result of fruition of immeasurable heaps of meritorious deeds He had performed in numerous former existences. The second line of the fifth verse, *analpa-kalpa-asaṃkheya-sātmībhūta-mahā-dayāḥ*, means that He had been the Embodiment of Great Compassion for not a few incalculable aeons. Finally, He is called the Omniscient Being (*sarvajña*).

The Buddha had the knowledge of the Ultimate Truth; He had the capacity to bring about the spiritual welfare of the world of beings; and He had also the supreme compassion for the suffering beings. Although the Truth was inexpressible, the Buddha taught it because He had the mercy and equipment to benefit the world.

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[1] On Buddhist doctrine of *pramāṇas* see the *Nyāyabindu* with *Nyāyabindu-ṭīkā* ed. by Chandrasekhara Sastri, Varanasi, 1954; Masaaki Hattori, *Dignāga, On Perception*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1968; Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 2 vols., New York, 1962; S.C. Vidyabhusana, *A History of Indian Logic*, Delhi, 1971, ch. III.

[2] *Tattvasaṃgraha-Pañjikā*, ed. by Dwarikadas Sastri, Varanasi, 1968, I, p. 18.

All the great Buddhist sages and doctors have emphasized Buddha's compassion which found expression in benefitting the world. The Pali Canon repeatedly tells us that He had attained enlightenment for the good of all beings, for the bliss of all beings, out of compassion for the world of beings (*bahujana-hitāya bahujana-sukhāya lokānukampāya*). Nāgārjuna stresses this point when he says: 'Homage to the Buddha whose majesty is inconceivable, whose wisdom is unattached, who taught the inexpressible Dharma out of compassion.'[1] In another of his work, this sage speaks of the Enlightened One in the following words: 'I salute the Omniscient One, the Unique Friend of all the living beings, who is freed from all the evils and who is adorned with all the good qualities.'[2]

Asaṅga (4th century AD) calls the Buddha *kāruṇyamaya*, Compassionate One, whose very being consisted of compassion for the suffering beings and who taught the excellent path (*uttama yāna*) with a view to removing the sufferings of living beings.[3] Vasubandhu (5th century AD) pays homage to the Buddha as the one who has completely destroyed all kinds of spiritual blindness and who has uplifted the world of beings from the mire of *saṃsāra*.[4] Dignāga (480-540 AD) the logician, who revered the Buddha as 'Right-Knowledge-Embodied (*pramāṇabhūta*), did not forget to say that He sought the welfare of the world of beings (*jagadhitaiṣiṇe*).[5]

[1] *Mahāyānaviṃśikā*, ed. by G. Tucci, in *Minor Buddhist Texts*, part I, Rome, 1956, verse 1 (8), p. 201:

avācyo vācakair dharmaḥ kṛpayā yena deśitaḥ|
namo' cintyaprabhavāya buddhāyāsaṅgabuddhaye||

[2] *Ratnāvalī*, ed. by P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960, verse 1 of chapter I, p. 296:

sarva-doṣa-vinirmuktaṃ guṇaiḥ sarvairalaṃkṛtam|
praṇamya sarvajñamahaṃ sarvasattva-eka-bāndhavam||

[3] *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, I.1, ed. Darbhanga, 1970, p. 1.

[4] *Abhidharmakośa*, I. 1 (ed. P. Pradhan): *yaḥ sarvathā sarva-hata-andhakāraḥ saṃsāra-paṅkājjagadujjahāra.*

[5] *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, I. 1(ed. M. Hattori): *pramāṇa-bhūtāya jagat-hitaiṣiṇe . . . sugatāya tāyine.*

The author of the *Abhidharmadīpa* refers to the Buddha as the 'Knower of the True Path' (*satpathajñā*) who taught the way to the pacification of the causes of suffering.[1] Enlightenment means not only the knowledge of Truth (*satya*) but also the knowledge of the True Way (*satpatha*) which He showed to others so that they could also end their suffering.

Dharmakīrti (7th century AD) pays homage to the Buddha as 'the Wholly Good One' (*samantabhadra*), who is Profound (*gambhīra*), the very Image of Generosity (*udāramūrti*), and who has eradicated the net of false discriminations. Manorathanandin explains that the Buddha is called Udāramūrti because He comprehended all knowable things for the benefit of living beings (*sakala-jñeya-satvārtha-vyapanāt*), and He is called Samantabhadra because His wealth of goodness and merits is entirely for the blessing of other beings (*kalyāṇam-parārthasampatsambhāralakṣaṇam*).[2] One can multiply the list of classical authorities in which the Buddha's enlightenment is conceived of as the perfection of Wisdom (*prajñā*) and Compassion (*karuṇā*).

Among modern Buddhist scholars D.T. Suzuki was the first who emphasized that both these elements constituted the essence of Buddhahood. Sangharakshita's succint remark deserves citation: 'The Enlightenment-experience is therefore not only one of illumination and freedom but also of infinite and inexhaustible love, a love which has for object all sentient beings, and which manifests as uninterrupted activity in pursuit of their temporal and spiritual welfare.'[3] Illumination and Love or Wisdom and Compassion are complementary attributes of Buddhahood, two faces of the same coin, neither without the other.

It has been taught in the *Gayāśīrṣasūtra* and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra* that Liberation (*mokṣa*) or Enlightenment (*bodhi*) is not possible without realizing both the principles. As Kamalaśīla puts it: *na prajñā-*

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[1] *Abhidharmadīpa*, pp. 1-3 (ed. P.S. Jaini).

[2] *Pramāṇavārttikam* with the commentary (vṛtti) of Monarathanandin, ed. by Dwarikadas Sastri, Varanasi, 1968, pp. 1-2. See also Candrakīrti's *Prasannapāda*, p. 1, opening lines where he emphasizes Buddha's mercy for the world of living beings.

[3] Sangharakshita, *The Three Jewels*, p. 56.

See D.T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, New York, 1963, p. 46; also D.T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, first series, pp. 118ff.; third series, pp. 239-37, London, 1949, 1953.

mātraṃ na upāyamātraṃ, 'neither wisdom alone nor compassion alone;'[1] Enlightenment means omniscience as well as all-embracing loving kindness.

'Enlightenment means Buddhahood (*buddhatva*); it is free from unity and multiplicity, free from origination and cessation, free from annihilation and eternality; it is free from all fantasies and concepts and is like space; it is known as Dharmakāya, and the Ultimate Reality.'[2]

With the attainment of Enlightenment ignorance and darkness disappear, craving is eradicated, opinion is set right, passions are shaken off, the arrows are destroyed, bonds are cut off, the flag of pride is dropped, the flag of Truth is unfurled, evil dispositions are thrown out, Suchness of Truth is known, the Reality-Limit is known and the Truth-Element (*dharmadhātu*) is discerned.[3]

A most remarkable statement, attributed to the historical Buddha and preserved in several places in the Pali Canon, describes the Enlightened One in the following words:

'Master of everything, I am Omniscient, undefiled among all things, having given up all things, having destroyed craving (I am) Liberated; having known by My own self, whom shall I point to (as My teacher)? I have no teacher; one like Me does not exist; in the world including the gods, none equals Me. In the world, I am the Perfected One, I am the Incomparable Teacher; I am the Rightly Enlightened One; I am the Quiescent One, the Released One.'[4] This statement occurs in the Sanskrit texts also with only slight variations, for example, instead of Pali *sabbābhibhū*, the *Lalitavistara* has *jina*, Victorious.[5] Aśvaghoṣa records a tradition according to which 'He became the perfectly wise, the Bhagavat, the Arhat, the King of the Law, the Tathāgata, He who has attained the knowledge of all forms, the Lord of all science.'[1]

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[1] See First *Bhāvanākrama* of Kamalaśila, ed. by G. Tucci in *Minor Buddhist Texts*, part II, Rome, 1958, p. 194.

[2] *Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjika*, *BST*, no. 12, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 200: bodhiḥ buddhatvaṃ, eka-aneka-svabhāva-viviktaṃ-anutpanna-aniruddhaṃ-anucchedamaśāśvataṃ-sarva-prapañca-vinirmuktam-ākāśa pratisamaṃ-dharmakāyākhyaṃ-paramārtha-tattvam ucyate. See also *Madhyamakaśāstra*, I. 1; XXV. 3.

[3] *Lalitavistara*, *BST*, no. 1, Darbhanga, 1958, pp. 253-54: vigataṃ tamo-andhakāraṃ-viśodhitā-tṛṣṇā-vivartitā-dṛṣṭiḥ-vikṣobhitāḥ-kleśāḥ-viśāritāḥ śalyāḥ-mukto-granthiḥ–prapātito-māna-dhvajaḥ-ucchrepito-dharma-dhvajaḥ-udghāṭitā-anuśayāḥ-jñātā-dharmatathatā-avabuddhā-bhūtakoṭiḥ-parijñāto-dharma-dhātuḥ.

[4] *Mahāvagga*, Nalanda edn., I, p. 11. My translation. The same verses are found in the *Majjhimanikāya*, Nalanda edn., 1, p. 221 (*Pāsarāsisutta* or *Ariyapariyesanasutta*); II. p. 336 (*Bodhirājakumārasutta*).

[5] *Lalitavistara*, Darbhanga edn., p. 296.

The Enlightened One is perfect in every sense. He has known what is to be known; He has developed what is to be developed; He has got rid of that which is to be got rid of; therefore, He is an Enlightened One.[2] He has destroyed the four *āsravas* or flowing impulses, viz. sensuality, desire for rebirth, speculative views, and spiritual blindness or nescience; He has eradicated the five *nīvaraṇas* or hindrances, viz., lustful desire, ill-will, physical and mental torpor, restlessness, and wavering; He has cut off the ten *saṃyojanas* or bonds or fetters, viz., belief in a substantial self, doubt, wrong belief in the efficacy of good works and ceremonies as leading to liberation, love of pleasure, ill-will, love of existence in the material worlds, love of existence in the non-material or formless worlds, spiritual blindness, pride and excitement. He has attained the Supreme Enlightenment by perfecting all the perfect virtues (*puretvā pāramī sabbaṃ patto sambodhiṃ uttamaṃ*).

THE BUDDHA AS OMNISCIENT

Helmuth von Glasenapp remarks that 'By assigning omniscience to the Buddha, the Buddhists give him an attribute that in theistic religions is reserved for God alone. One more item places the Buddha on an equal footing with a cosmic lord: it is taught that he attained to the highest state of moral perfection.'[3]

In the preceding section we have referred to some of the moral, intellectual and superhuman achievements of the Buddha. A famous Pali verse describes His achievements in the following words:

'Righteousness, concentration, wisdom, and the incomparable liberation: to these verities the illustrious Gautama awoke.'[4]

[1] *Buddhacarita*, XIV. 68. E.B. Cowell's translation in *SBE*, XLIX, Delhi, 1968, p. 155.

[2] *Majjhimanikāya*, II, p. 400.
abhiññeyaṃ abhiññātaṃ bhāvetabbaṃ ca bhāvitaṃ/
pahātabbaṃ pahīṇaṃ me tasmā buddhosmi brāhmaṇā//

The verse occurs also in *Theragāthā*, verse 828, and in the *Suttanipāta*, verse (157) 558. See *Khuddakanikāya*, II, Nalanda edn., p. 352 and I, Nalanda edn., p. 358 respectively.

[3] Helmuth von Glasenap, op. cit., p. 73.

[4] *Dīghanikāya*, Nalanda edn., II, p. 95. *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Nalanda edn., II, p. 1.
sīlaṃ samādhi paññā ca vimutti ca anuttarā/
anubuddhā ime dhammā Gotamena yasassinā//

Liberation (*vimukti*) followed moral perfection and perfection in wisdom (*prajñā*). The word Buddha means Wise, Knower, Awakened, Enlightened, Illumined, and the word Bodhi means Wisdom, Knowledge, Awakening, Enlightenment, Illumination. All these words stress the fact that the Buddha is one who knows, cognizes, understands. A Rightly Enlightened One (*samyak-sambuddha*) is therefore equipped with all knowledge. In other words, He is all-knowing, omniscient.

The Buddhists do not merely assign omniscience to the Buddha. It is an essential element of their faith (*śraddhā*) that Buddhahood includes omniscience. To be Buddha means to know all that is to be known. Bodhi is infinite knowledge. It is another name for omniscience:

Buddha eva sarvākārajñatā sarvākārajñataiva Buddhaḥ, bodhiḥ eva sarvākārajñatā sarvākārajñataiva bodhiḥ.[1]

The *Lalitavistara* says that the Bodhisattva 'entered the city of omniscience'; that is, He became Buddha, Omniscient.[2] Nāgārjuna refers to Buddha as Omniscient (*sarvajña*).[3] In the *Abhidharmadīpa*, the Buddha is adored as Omniscient (*namaḥ sarvajñāya*). Śāntarakṣita composed 522 verses in Sanskrit on the 'examination of an omniscient being' out of which 384 verses are devoted to the exposition and defence of the Buddha's omniscience. Ratnakīrti wrote an independent treatise called *Sarvajñasiddhi*.[4]

Like the nineteenth century European myth that the human Buddha of primitive Buddhism was deified in the Mahāyāna Buddhism, the view that omniscience came to be assigned to the Buddha later on is erroneous. Even so learned and accurate a scholar of the Pali Tripiṭaka as K.N. Jayatilleke thought that in the most ancient texts of the Pali Canon the Buddha was not acclaimed as omniscient. He seems to think that such claim was not made before the compilation of the *Kathāvatthu* and the *Paṭisambhidāmagga;* in his opinion, the Buddha did not claim omniscience.[5] But such an opinion is contradicted by a most ancient Pali verse preserved in the *Mahāvagga* as well as the *Majjhimanikāya*. The Buddha claimed omniscience when He said: *sabbavidūhamasmi*.[1] The word *sabbavidū* is identical with *sabbaññu* (Sanskrit *sarvajña*).

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[1] *L'Abhisa nayālaṃkāravṛtti di Ārya-Vimuktisena*, ed. by Corrado Pensa, Rome, 1967, p. 37.

[2] *Lalitavistara*, p. 254 line 5.

[3] *Ratnāvalī*, I. 1.

[4] *Tattvasaṃgraha*, ch. XXVI, verses 3124-3646; Jha's English trans., pp. 1391-1570; *Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalī*, pp. 1-28.

[5] K.N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 378-80.

Mahā-Brahmā, Great God, is denied omniscience; he does not know something which the Buddha knows; he does not see the reality as it is (*yathābhūta*). Nirvāṇa, which the Buddha realized, is not known to Brahmā.

In the oldest Pali texts omniscience of the Buddha is understood in the sense that He can know anything He chooses to know. He is possessed of the three-fold knowledge. He says: 'As far back as I wish I remember various previous births, namely one birth, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand births, many cycles of evolution of the universe, of dissolution, and of evolution and dissolution.' He also knows the birth, death, and rebirth of all the beings. 'As far as I wish with my divine and purified vision, surpassing human vision, I see beings dying away and being reborn, low and exalted, fair and ugly, with good destinies or evil destinies according to their *karma*.' The most important and the third kind of knowledge which He has is concerning the fact of Liberation. 'With the destruction of *āsravas*, I have realized here and now by my own super-knowledge the freedom of mind and the freedom of wisdom which are free from *āsravas*, and I abide therein.'[2]

This three-fold knowledge can be attained by any other earnest seeker.[3] But to equate the Buddha's knowledge with three-fold knowledge only would be to restrict His field of knowledge which, as we saw earlier, is infinite. Not only the Buddha's knowledge is infinite, He is also infinite. The *Suttanipāta*[4] says that 'There is no measure of the person who has attained the End (*attha*, i.e. Nirvāṇa)'; the finite cannot grasp the infinite. All human measures are finite measures. Nirvāṇa is infinite.

The existence of an omniscient person is denied, however, in some *sūtras* in a special sense. For example, when a certain teacher claims infinite knowledge and vision as being all-seeing and omniscient and claims that even while he walks or stands or sleeps there is knowledge and vision present to him continuously, such a claim is rejected. No person can be omniscient in this sense.[1] Omniscience does not mean that one knows all at once all the time; it means that there is no limit to the cognition of an omniscient being, that he can know whatever he chooses to know.

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[1] *Mahāvagga*, p. 11; *PTS*, ed., p. 8; *Majjhimanikāya*, I, p. 221; *PTS*, ed., I, p. 171.

[2] *Majjhimanikāya*, II, p. 174.

[3] *Dīghanikāya*, I, pp. 71-73.

[4] Verse 1076.

The omniscience of the Buddha is clearly affirmed at many places in the Pali Canon. He is called *sabbavidū* and *sabbaññū* in the *Mahāvagga* and the *Majjhimanikāya*. Another synonymous term is *samantacakkhu*, 'all-seeing' an epithet of the Buddha; it is said that 'the Knower sees all' (*sabbaṃ passati cakkhumā*).[2] He was omniscient and He had known all things through supreme knowledge and insight.[3]

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* has a section on the omniscience of the Tathāgata. The Tathāgata knows completely all that is conditioned (created) and unconditioned (uncreated); this knowledge of the omniscient is without obstructions or veils; He completely knows the past, the future and the present.[4]

The *Milindapañha* also has a section on the Buddha's omniscience. The king Milinda (the Indo-Greek king of the Punjab, Menander, *circa* 150 BC) asked the Buddhist philosopher Nāgasena the following question: 'Venerable Nāgasena, was the Buddha omniscient?' Nāgasena gave the following reply: 'Yes, Great King; the Blessed One was omniscient. However, the vision of knowledge was not always and continuously present with Him. The Blessed One's omniscience depended on His reflection. When he reflected, He knew whatever He wanted to know.'[5]

Among the Brahmanical philosophers and critics of Buddhist thought, Kumārilabhaṭṭa had taken great pains in refuting the reality of an omniscient being, especially of Buddha's omniscience.

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[1] *Majjhimanikāya*, II, p. 218.

[2] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, Nalanda ed., I, pp. 134, 138; *Majjhimanikāya*, I, p. 218; *Mahāvagga*, p. 8.

[3] *Theragāthā*, *gāthās* of Channa and Melajina (*Khuddakanikāya*, II, pp. 250, 264).

[4] *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, Nalanda edn., in *Khuddakanikāya*, V, 1960, p. 145.

[5] *Milindapañho*, ed. by R.D. Vadekar, Bombay, 1940, p. 105 (IV. 20). My translation. See T.W. Rhys Davids's translation, *The Questions of King Milinda*, *SBE*, XXXV, Delhi, 1969, p. 154.

A searching analysis of his arguments and a detailed exposition of the existence of an omniscient being and of Buddha's omniscience is found in the works of Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, and Ratnakīrti. Here we will cite some of the statements of Śāntarakṣita. He points out in his *Tattvasaṃgraha* that the Omniscient One is not amenable to human perception because all men are of limited vision. Kamalaśīla adds that the limited means of human cognition such as perception and inference are inapplicable to the omniscient. 'How can that Person be perceptible to you who has knowledge of all things—unless you also had the knowledge of all things?' By His very nature, the Omniscient One is imperceptible. Replying to Kumārila's objection, Śāntarakṣita says that if the Omniscient One is denied merely on the basis of non-apprehension, then you may also deny the marriage of your own mother and such other things (as e.g., intercourse between your mother and father). The opinion of dull-witted men cannot set aside things as they really are. There are some saintly persons who are believed to have knowledge of the Omniscient One. 'The Omniscient One, being self-luminous, perceives Himself by Himself.' When there is a defect in the eye, there is no cognition, even though the thing is there; similarly an Omniscient Person would not be seen directly by dull-witted persons.[1]

In two verses, especially relevant to the student of Comparative Religion, Śāntarakṣita declares the following: 'The Buddhas are omniscient only because they have the direct knowledge of truth regarding all things. If then this same knowledge belongs to the other teachers also, then they also are *Buddhas*; and their Buddhahood does not differ from that of *the Buddha*; because they also possess perfect knowledge, and this is the sole characteristic of the Buddha.'[2] The singularity of the Buddha's omniscience, however, is affirmed on the ground that of all the World-Teachers He alone knows the world in its real form as being without *ātman*. Omniscience follows from the removal of the hindrances of passions (*kleśāvaraṇa*) and the hindrances of cognizable things (*jñeyāvaraṇa*). The hindrances of passions or afflictions such as love, hate, etc., obstruct the perception of the real nature of things; both these kinds of hindrances have been destroyed by the Buddha by direct perception of the fact of non-existence of *ātman*, and by intense and continued meditation on *ātman*-less-ness.

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[1] *Tattvasaṃgraha*, verses 3276-3277, 3282, 3290, 3303 (summary).

[2] ibid, verses 3334-3335. Jha's translation.

All darkness of passions disappears when this bright lamp of selflessness is there; the perverted belief in the existence of *ātman* is the root cause of passions such as love, hate, etc. He who has uprooted this wrong notion, has destroyed all obstructions to omniscience.[1]

'The Buddha stands at the head of all World-Teachers because He alone at the very outset expounded the doctrine of not-self.'[2] 'He perceived the Truth Himself and expounded it through compassion.'[3]

'Dharma is that from which follow happiness or prosperity and Liberation or Supreme Good.'[4]

'That One is omniscient is understood only from the clear teaching that He imparts regarding Heaven and the Highest Good; because that bears testimony to His knowledge of the most important matters. Of what use is the knowledge of the number of sands of the seas? What then have we to do with His knowledge of other things?'[5] Omniscience must be meaningful; it must lead to the Supreme Good, to Buddhahood; and it must radiate Supreme Compassion. Śāntarakṣita defines the *sarvajña* as 'One who comprehends within a single cognitive moment the entire round of all that is to be known.[6] 'Whatever He wishes to know He comes to know it without fail; such is His power, as He has shaken off all evil. He knows things either simultaneously or in succession, just as He wishes; and having secured the knowledge of all things, He becomes the Lord.'[7]

THE TEN INTELLECTUAL POWERS OF THE BUDDHA

One of the epithets of the Buddha is the 'Ten-Powered-One' (*daśabala*). The ten *balas* are cognitive in nature, they may be called intellectual powers. The Transcendent One (*tathāgata*) possesses the following ten powers.

1. The Tathāgata knows, as it really is, what is possible (*ṭhānaṃ*)[8] as possible and what is impossible (*aṭhānaṃ*) as impossible.

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[1] *Tattvasaṃgraha-Pañjikā*, on verses 3337-3338.

[2] *Tattvasaṃgraha*, verse 3340.

[3] ibid, verse 3485.

[4] ibid, verse 3486.

[5] ibid, verses 3228-3229. Jha's translation.

[6] ibid, verse 3627.

[7] ibid, verses 3628-3629. Jha's translation.

[8] The word *ṭhāna* is translated as 'fit' and the word *aṭhāna* as 'unfit' by H. Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, Varanasi, 1968, p. 62. Har Dayal has 'correct' and 'faulty', *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskṛit Litera-*

2. The Tathāgata knows, as it really is, the fruition, according to their conditions and causes, of the performance of *karma* in the past, present and future.

3. The Tathāgata knows, as it really is, the way leading to all states of existence.

4. The Tathāgata knows, as it really is, the universe with its different elements and forms.

5. The Tathāgata knows, as it really is, the diverse inclinations and characters of beings.

6. The Tathāgata knows, as it really is, what goes on in the faculties or senses of other beings.

7. The Tathāgata knows, as it really is, the defilement, perfection and emergence from the states of emancipation, concentration and attainment.

8-10. The remaining three powers of the Tathāgata consist of the three-fold knowledge: recollection of His former existences and habitations as far as He wishes; unlimited knowledge of the birth, death, and rebirth of beings in different states of existence; knowledge of the destruction of the *āsravas* and of the attainment of complete release.

The *sūtra* declares that 'The Tathāgata has these Tathāgata-powers, endowed with which powers the Tathāgata claims the excellent position, roars like a Lion in assemblies, and sets in motion the wheel of holy life.' These ten cognitive powers thus further illustrate the meaning of Bodhi.[1]

THE FOUR-FOLD FEARLESSNESS OF THE BUDDHA

Fearlessness or self-confidence is a quality of the Buddha; occasionally it is also found attributed to the Bodhisattvas. Several canonical and non-canonical texts in Pali and Sanskrit give a list of four *vaiśāradyas* (*vesārajjas*) of the Tathāgata. The word *vaiśāradya* means skill or proficiency; but in Buddhism it is a technical religious term

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ture, Delhi, 1970, p. 20, while I.B. Horner has 'causal occasion' and 'not causal occasion', *The Middle Length Sayings*, London, 1967, I, p. 93. K.N. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 469, prefers 'possible' and 'impossible' which is good enough. See however, Rhys Davids and Stede, *Pāli-English Dictionary*, p. 289.

[1] The list of ten powers of the Tathāgata is found at several places in the Pali Canon and in Sanskrit texts, *Aṅguttaranikāya*, IV, pp. 128-29; *Majjhimanikāya* I, pp. 98-101; *Dharmasaṃgraha*, section 76, ed. in *Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgraha*, part I, Darbhanga; *Mahāvyutpatti*, section VII, ed. by R. Sakaki, Tokyo, 1962.

which means self-confidence. I.B. Horner translates *vesārajja* as 'conviction' which seems good enough.

The four grounds on which the Buddha is convinced and is fearless relate to the following things: 1. Confidence of being supremely enlightened as to all things (i.e. omniscience). 2. Confidence or conviction of the knowledge that all the flowing impulses (*āsravas*) have been destroyed by Him. 3. Confidence of having described correctly and exactly the hindrances or obstructive things to holy life. 4. Confidence of the correctness of His path to the attainment of all spiritual virtues culminating in Liberation.[1] This list corresponds to that given in the *Dharmasaṃgraha* and the Pali Canon.[2] In the *Aṅguttaranikāya* these confidences are formulated in the following manner:

'As to the charge made: you who claim to be perfectly enlightened are not perfectly enlightened in these things, I see no grounds, monks, for showing that any recluse or brāhmin, that any Deva or Māra or Brahmā, that anyone in the whole world can with justice make this charge. Since I see no grounds for such a charge, I abide in the attainment of peace, of fearlessness, of confidence.'[3] This is the formulation of the first *vaiśāradya*: the other three are formulated likewise. The manner of formulation indicates that there were some *śramaṇas* and brāhmaṇas who did not believe in the Buddha and His teaching, and that the Buddha remained fearless and satisfied in His achievements and activities.

THE EIGHTEEN EXTRAORDINARY ATTRIBUTES OF THE BUDDHA

A large number of Buddhist Sanskrit texts often mention the (ten) powers, (four) convictions, and (eighteen) extraordinary attributes of the Buddha in one sentence (*bala-vaiśāradya-āveṇika-buddha dharmāḥ*) defining, as it were, the Buddha's achievements. The term *āveṇika* means extraordinary, special, particular, exclusive, independent, unmixed or unadulterated; the term *dharma* means attribute, quality, property, virtue, mark, nature etc. *Āveṇika-*

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[1] This list of four *vaiśāradyas* is according to the *Mahāvyutpatti*, section VII, 131-34.

[2] *Dharmasaṃgraha*, section 77; *Aṅguttaranikāya*, II, pp. 10-11; *Majjhimanikāya*, I, pp. 101-2. Franklin Edgerton refers to some other different lists, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, pp. 512-13.

[3] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, II, p. 10. Translation by F.L. Woodward, *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, London, 1962, II, p. 9. See also I.B. Horner's translation in *The Middle Length Sayings*, I, p. 96.

dharma means, 'extra-ordinary attribute'; the texts enumerate *āveṇika-dharmas* which are peculiar to the perfect Buddha and hence called Buddha-*dharmas*. These *dharmas* throw additional light on the meaning of Enlightenment and the nature of the Buddha.

Although the word *āveṇika*, in the sense of extraordinary or uncommon, does occur in the Pali texts, for example, in the *Saṃyuttanikāya* and the *Visuddhimagga*, the category of *āveṇika-dharmas* is not found in the Pali Canon. It has been noted that the list occurs in a medieval Buddhological Pali text, the *Jinālaṃkāra*.[1]

Har Dayal, however, is not right in thinking that the list in Buddhist Sanskrit texts is so late as the third century AD.[2] The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, which is quoted in the *Sūtrasamuccaya* of Nāgārjuna and which was translated into Chinese in 258 AD, mentions these *dharmas*. The older parts of the *Lalitavistara* and the *Mahāvastu* are perhaps as old as 200 BC. The *Avadānaśataka*, likewise, seems to date from *circa* 100 BC. All these early texts refer to the *āveṇika-dharmas* of the Buddha. The *Mahāvastu*, the *Dharmasaṃgraha*, the *Arthaviniścayasūtra* and the *Mahāvyutpatti* give a list of and the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* comments on these attributes.[3] The eighteen *dharmas* of the Buddha, according to the *Mahāvastu*, are the following:

1. The Tathāgata has infallible knowledge and insight of the past.
2. He has infallible knowledge and insight of the future.
3. He has infallible knowledge and insight of the present.
4. All His acts of body are preceded by knowledge and concerned with knowledge.
5. All His acts of speech are preceded by knowledge and concerned with knowledge.

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[1] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, Nalanda edn., III, p. 212, women's *āveṇikāni dukkhāni*; *Visuddhimagga*, Cambridge (Mass.), p. 596 (XXVI para 106) *āveṇika bhūmi*. Attention to *āveṇika-dharma* in the Pali *Jinālaṃkāra* was first invited by Eugéne Burnouf. The text is not accessible to me.

[2] Har Dayal, op. cit., p. 23.

[3] *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, ed. *BST*, no. 6, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 20, line 12; *Lalitavistara*, Darbhanga, 1969, p. 200; *Mahāvastu Avadāna*, ed. *BST*, no. 14, Darbhanga, 1970, I, p. 120; *Avadānaśataka*, ed. *BST*, no. 19, Darbhanga, 1958, p. 4, line 7; *Dharmasaṃgraha*, section, 79; *Arthaviniścayasūtra*, section 25, *BST*, no. 17; *Mahāvyutpatti*, section IX; *The Arthaviniścaya-sūtra and its Commentary* (*Nibandhana*), ed. by N.H. Samtani, Patna, 1971, see especially *Nibandhana*, pp. 279ff.

6. All His acts of thought are preceded by knowledge and concerned with knowledge.
7. There is no loss in resolution.
8. There is no loss in energy.
9. There is no loss in mindfulness.
10. There is no loss in concentration.
11. There is no loss in wisdom.
12. There is no loss in freedom.
13. There is no error.
14. There is no crying or impetuousity.
15. His mindfulness is unfailing.
16. His mind is never unsteady.
17. His impartiality is not thoughtless.
18. He is without the notion of diversity.

The text states that these eighteen extraordinary attributes of the Buddha constitute His Buddha-Eye.[1]

It may be mentioned in passing that the Vaibhāṣikas, a branch of the Sarvāstivāda School, had an entirely different list of eighteen extraordinary attributes of the Buddha. According to the *Abhidharmakośa-Bhāṣya* and the *Sphuṭārthā*, their list contained the following items: ten intellectual powers, four *vaiśāradyas* or convictions, three *smṛtyupasthānas* or applications of mindfulness, and *mahākaruṇā* or great compassion.[2] All schools of Buddhism agree that the Buddha's great compassion is extraordinary (*asādhāraṇa*), not shared by other saints and enlightened beings. This does not mean that others are not compassionate; the pure, intense and infinite compassion is a peculiar characteristic of the Perfect Buddha.

THE STUDY OF BUDDHOLOGY

Har Dayal, the author of a remarkable book on Bodhisattva doctrine, has summed up the evolution of Buddhological notions in the following striking words:

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[1] *Mahāvastu Avadāna*, I, p. 120. The order of enumeration of these attributes is different in the *Arthaviniścayasūtra*. The *Dharmasaṃgraha* and the *Mahāvyutpatti* have an identical order which differs from that of the *Mahāvastu* and the *Arthaviniścayasūtra*. See also the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, *BST*, no. 13, p. 179. Yaśomitra in his *Sphuṭārthā* on the *Abhidharmakośa* (VIII. 28) seems to have used a different list. See *Abhidharmakośam*: *Bhāṣya-Sphuṭārthā-sahitam*, ed. by Dwarikadas Sastri, Varanasi, 1973, IV, p. 1083.

[2] *Abhidharmakośa- bhāṣya*, ed. P. Pradhan, Patna, 1967, VII. 28, p. 411. The *Avadānaśataka*, *BST*, p. 4. also supports this list.

'The conception of Buddhahood was developed to its ultimate conclusion in universal pan-Buddhism (as distinct from Pantheism). The Buddhas were subjected to a sixfold process of evolution: they were multiplied, immortalised, deified, spiritualised, universalised and unified.

'There were many causes, which led to this radical transformation of the ideal of a Buddha's personality. The idea of a Buddha's enduring dharma-body is found in the Pali canon. Gautama Buddha was at first regarded as only an *arhat* like the other monks, and he disclaimed omniscience. But several Pali passages indicate that he was in some way also superhuman. He could make Yasa invisible, and work miracles at Uruvela and other places. He declared that he was neither a man nor a *deva*, but a Buddha, as if the Buddhas formed a distinct species or class of beings by themselves. He is said to be unlike the other monks, as he first found the way of Enlightenment and showed it to others. He promised rebirth in *svarga* (heaven) to those who should have faith in him and love him. His body was transfigured, and his birth was accompanied by miracles. He could have lived much longer, if he had wished to do so. He could enable a visitor to see the hidden parts of his body under his garments. Such details show that the process of deification began soon after Gautama Buddha's death. It was continued and intensified by the Mahāsāṅghikas, the Vetulyakas, the Andhakas and other Buddhist sects. The uneducated masses and their enthusiastic leaders always love to exalt and glorify their prophet. Hero-worship is ingrained in human nature and takes strange forms among the uncultured sections of society.'[1]

What shall we say about this judgement? One is impressed by the amount of end-notes and bibliographical information published in Har Dayal's book. But he cannot be said to have taken up the study of the Buddhist religion seriously. And he failed to understand the meaning of the Bodhisattva doctrine. This is the danger involved in a mere philological exercise into the contents of sacred texts. One has no moral right of treating the scriptures as fictions, magazines and newspapers. Especially an outsider, say, a non-

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[1] Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 27-28.

Buddhist student, is not justified in being so scurrilous about the most important matters of the Buddhistic culture. One may study a religious tradition all one's life yet remain far from grasping its essential message.

If the Buddhist masters and religious poets of classical antiquity were 'uneducated' and 'uncultured,' who else could be called educated and cultured? It is true indeed that the sages and saints of Theravāda, Mahāsāṃghika, Sarvāstivāda, and Mahāyāna did not study English, French or German; they did not have the imported British culture of the pre-1947 Indian *sahebs*, and they did not pretend to be 'modern' because they had not visited England and Europe and their approach to the Dharma was not inspired by the views of Rhys Davids, Oldenberg or Louis De la Vallée Poussin.

The Buddhist masters of antiquity, who worked out the details of Buddhological ideas, were experts in meditation, quite advanced in religious culture and intellectual nicety; possessed of profound faith and tremendous moral character, they sought to elucidate and illustrate the meaning of religious striving and ultimate concern of man set forth by the Transcendent One. The above observations of Har Dayal only show how glibly the study of Buddhism can be undertaken by those who are convinced that the 'Western' and 'scientific' methods of thinking are infallible measures of all truth.

Our study of the most ancient extant Buddhist texts shows that the conception of the Buddha's real nature had exercised the minds of the earliest thinking Buddhists. The different descriptions of His personality, His character and His attributes are different attempts to comprehend His real nature which in the ultimate analysis turns out to be incomprehensible and inexpressible. The Buddhists never forgot the historicity and humanity of the Buddha; the fact is that the more they thought of Buddhology the more profound they found their subject. The Transcendent One was wholly beyond all conceptions, and this very fact of His inconceivability contributed to the growth of conceptions which form the subject-matter of Buddhology. In the limited space at our disposal here, we can only refer to a few more attempts to understand and describe the Buddha nature.

MORAL PERFECTION AND FREEDOM OF THE TATHĀGATA

The *Ārakheyyasutta* stresses the blameless life of the Tathāgata.

He has four things which He need not guard against: He has perfect conduct of body, perfect conduct of speech, perfect conduct of mind, and a perfect livelihood, whereby He need not be on His guard that anyone would find Him out.[1] In all His activities the Tathāgata is morally perfect and it is not possible for anyone in the world to find a fault in Him.

Another *sutta* states that the Tathāgata dwells with a mind whose barriers are broken down because He is freed, detached and released from the following ten things: from the physical body, feeling, sensation, volitional forces, consciousness, birth, oldage, death, suffering and defilements. Just as a lotus born and grown up in water, on reaching the surface rests on the water unsoiled by it, even so the Tathāgata, freed, detached and released from these ten states, dwells with a mind whose barriers are broken down.[2]

Several epithets or names of Tathāgata refer to His moral perfection and absolute freedom from fear of all kinds. Thus He is called *Nirbhaya*, Fearless; *Śuciḥ*, the Pure; *Nirmala*, the Immaculate; *Niravadya*, the Blameless; *Śāntapāpa*, Whose sins are extinguished, *Hataviṣaḥ*, Who has destroyed poison; *Anaṅgajit*, the Conqueror of Cupid; *Aghahantā*, the Destroyer of evil; *Bhavāntakṛt*, the Destroyer of rebirth; and *Vidyācaraṇa-sampanna*, Endowed with Knowledge and Good Conduct, etc. A well-known and popular formula, recited in honour of the Buddha by all Buddhists, and found in canonical as well as non-canonical texts in Pali and Sanskrit, speaks of the Buddha thus:

iti pi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammā sambuddho vijjā caraṇa sampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā deva manussānaṃ buddho bhagavā.

This means in simple English: 'He is indeed the Glorious One, Perfect, Rightly Enlightened, Endowed with Wisdom and Righteousness, the Well-Gone, Knower of the world, Unsurpassed, Tamer of tamable men, Teacher of gods and men, Awakened, the Glorious One.'[3]

The word Bhagavā has been translated as 'Lord,' 'Blessed One,' 'Exalted One' and 'Glorious One.' Bhagavat and Bhagavān are synonyms of Bhagavā. The word Arhat has been translated as 'Perfected,' 'Accomplished,' 'Worthy' and 'Holy.' Buddhaghosa, the greatest commentator of the Pali Canon, has given a detailed explanation of this formula.[1] Dhammapāla's commentary on the *Visuddhimagga* further explains the meaning of all the Buddhological terms occurring in the formula.[2] The word Sugata is translated as 'Well-Farer,' 'Well-Gone' and 'Sublime.' According to Buddhaghosa, He is called Sugata because His manner of going is good, because He has gone to an Excellent Spot (Nirvāṇa), and because He has gone rightly. According to Durvekamiśra, He has reached Excellence or Praise (*praśasta*), has gone beyond the *saṃsāra*, hence He is called 'Well-Gone' (*sugata*).[3] The *Laṃkāvatārasūtra* teaches that the *arhat* is one who has attained the *dhyānas* (meditations), *balas* (powers), *abhijñās* (superknowledges), and who is without passions, sufferings, and *vikalpas* (thought-constructs).[4]

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Nalanda edn., III, p. 216.

[2] ibid, IV, p. 220.

[3] *Dīghanikāya*, I, p. 87; *Majjhimanikāya*, I, p. 50; *Saṃyuttanikāya*, II, p. 59; *Aṅguttaranikāya*, I, p. 167.

GLORIES AND MYSTERIES OF THE TATHĀGATA

The Buddha is called Bhagavān because He has completely eradicated all defilements, *karmas*, and the obscurations of passions and knowables. He is in complete possession of mastery, beauty, fame, glory, wisdom, and benevolent activity, therefore, He is called the Glorious One (*bhagavān*).[5] Hundreds of His epithets known to Pali and Sanskrit texts illustrate His glories abundantly as they are understood in the Buddhist tradition.[6]

The Transcendent One, if He wished it, could make His voice heard throughout the Thrice-a-Thousand-Great-Thousandfold-World-System (*tisahassī-mahāsahassī-loka-dhātu*). He does this by suffusing with His radiance (*āloka*) the Thrice-a-Thousand-Great-Thousand-fold-World-System.[1]

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[1] *Visuddhimagga*, Cambridge (Mass.), pp. 162ff; English trans. by Nāṇamoli, op. cit., pp. 206ff.

[2] *Visuddhimaggo with Paramatthamañjūsāṭīkā*, ed. by Rewatadhamma, Varanasi, 1969, I, pp. 410ff.

[3] *Dharmottarapradīpa* of Durvekamiśra, ed. by D. Malvania, Patna, 1971, p. 3: *praśastaṃ gataḥ sugataḥ praśastaṃ yathā bhavati tathā gataḥ saṃsārāt prakrāntaḥ*.

[4] *Laṃkāvatārasūtra*, *BST*, no. 3, p. 49. See also (ed. *BST*, no. 4) *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-Ālokavyākhyā* of Haribhadra, p. 273: *pūjādakṣiṇāguṇaprakarṣādyarhatayā arhantāḥ*.

[5] ibid, p. 272.

[6] See *Majjhimanikāya*, II, *Upālisutta*, pp. 43ff; *Lalitavistara*, ch. XXVI; *Prajñā*: Lexicon-Dictionary Portions of the Sanskrit-Tibetan Thesaurus-cum-Grammar, Gangtok, 1961, part I, pp. 1-4.

The Transcendent One appears very rarely in this world.[2] It was believed that it is impossible at any time that two Perfect Buddhas should appear in one and the same world-system.[3] Not only men, gods also were eager to behold the Glorious One. Hatthaka, a scion of god (*devaputta*), says that he never had enough of beholding the Glorious One while he was a human being and that he died regretting this.[4] A glimpse of the Glorious One was eagerly sought for by divine and human beings. A *sūtra* records the visit of Prasenajit (Pali Pasenadī), the King of Kosala, to the Buddha in the following manner. Before entering the dwelling place of the Buddha, the King removed his crown and sword and gave them to his minister, Dīgha Kārāyāṇa. Having quietly and respectfully reached the entrance of His dwelling place, the King inclined his head to the Glorious One's feet, kissed the Glorious One's feet on all sides with his mouth and touched them on all sides with his hands, and then announced his own name, 'I am, Venerable Sir, Prasenajit, King of Kosala.'[5]

Even the physical body of the Buddha was extraordinary. His form or body was 'endowed with every grace' (*sabbākāra-varūpeta*). He was lovely, of pleasant look (*pāsādika*), and worthy of a glimpse (*pāsādanīya*) and deserving a visit (*dassanīya*).[6] Wearing His last body, adorned with thirty-two major and eighty minor marks, He was also known as a Great Person (*mahāpuruṣa*). Many texts both Pali and Sanskrit, give a list of these marks.[7]

Some of these physical marks (*lakṣaṇas*) are found depicted on the figures of the Buddha, e.g. *uṣnīṣa*, curly hair, *ūrṇā*, long earlobes, the wheel on the palm and the sole etc.[1] These marks are not peculiar to the body of the Buddha; they may be found on the body of a universal emperor, a brāhmaṇa or any other distinguished person. The Buddhist peculiarity consists in offering a moral explanation for the existence of these marks. Nāgārjuna says that the *mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇas* are attainable by living a virtuous life, by performing manifold deeds of compassion, righteousness, and holiness.[2] Vasubandhu as well as Vīryaśrīdatta also inform us that each mark on the body of the Buddha appeared as a consequence of a hundred merits.[3] As for the difference between a *cakravartin*, sovereign monarch, and the Buddha, Nāgārjuna says: 'As regards the (thirty-two) marks, a universal monarch is to be likened to the twinkling of a firefly, whereas an Enlightened One shines like the sun.'[4] A verse in the *Theragāthā*[5] describes Him as the Light of the World (*lokapajjota*).

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, I, pp. 210-11.

[2] ibid, p. 247; ibid, II, p. 420.

[3] *Dīghanikāya*, II, p. 168.

[4] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, I, pp. 259-60.

[5] *Majjhimanikāya*, II, p. 367.

[6] *Dīghanikāya*, II, p. 121; *Aṅguttaranikāya*, II, p. 40.

[7] On *mahāpuruṣa-laksaṇas* see *Dīghanikāya*, III, pp. 110ff. *Mahāvastu*, Darbhanga edn., I, pp. 177-78; *Dharmasaṃgraha*, sections 83-84, (in *BST*, no. 1), p. 334; *Abhidharmadīpa-Vibhāṣāprabhā-vṛtti*, pp. 188, 192; *Arthaviniścayasūtra*, sections 26-27 with the commentary of Vīryaśrīdatta, ed. Samtani, pp. 283-08; *Mahāvyutpatti*, section XVII, ed. Sakaki, pp. 22ff, see also F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, pp. 558-60.

The Buddha is not just a Great Person (*mahāpuruṣa*). He is called the Unique Person (*ekapuggala*), the Wonderful Man (*acchariyamanussa*), Perfect Wisdom Embodied as Man (*manussabhūtaṃ sambuddhaṃ*). He illuminates the entire world with His glory.[6] He appears in the world for the welfare of the whole world, for the happiness of the whole world, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and men. His teaching is a blessing in the beginning, a blessing in the middle, and a blessing in the end.

A *sūtra* describes the Transcendent One as 'the Unique, the Nonpareil, the Supernal, the Equal of the Supernal, the Supernal Person, the Unequalled, the Equal to the Unequalled, the Incomparable

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[1] See A. Foucher, *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, London, 1918; A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, New Delhi, 1979; H. Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, New York, 1946.

[2] See *The String of Pearls* (*Ratnāvalī*), Chapter II, verses 47-101, translated into English from the Tibetan by Bhikkhu Pāsādiko in *Visākha Pūjā* (2512/1969), Bangkok, 1969, pp. 39-46. These verses are missing in the Sanskrit text published by G. Tucci (*JRAS*, 1934-36) and P.L. Vaidya, *BST*, no. 10.

[3] *Abhidharmakośa*, IV. 110, *eka ekaṃ puṇya-śatajaṃ*. See *Sphuṭārthā*, p. 737, ed., Varanasi, 1971; *Vibhāṣāprabhā-Vṛtti*, p. 187, ed., Patna, 1959; *Arthaviniścaya Nibandhana*, p. 307.

[4] *The String of Pearls*, II. 101, translation by Bhikkhu Pāsādiko.

[5] Verse 148.

[6] *Theragāthā*, verse 1261.

One, the Best among bipeds.'[1] An *Avadāna* refers to His brilliance as surpassing that of one thousand suns.[2] His wisdom is complete (*sambodhi*) and insuperable (*anuttara*). He is the King of Righteousness (*Dharma-rāja*) because His righteousness is supreme. He is named the Truth (*saccanāma*); His name i.e., Buddha, is the same as Truth i.e., Dharma.[3]

He is the Master of the universe (*lokanātha*) and the Father of the world because, having attained immortality, He taught to others the threefold knowledge leading to the same state.[4]

As Śāntarakṣita says: 'The Buddhas are not mortal because they have gone beyond the *saṃsāra* and the five destinies (*gatis*). Their birth is nothing but the creation of themselves by themselves.'[5] It is an error to suppose that such a Buddhology is a later Mahāyānian innovation.

An early *sūtra* teaches the unspeakability of the Transcendent One thus: 'Since the Tathāgata, even when actually present, is incomprehensible, it is inept to say of Him—of the Uttermost Person, the Supernal Person, the Attainer of the Supernal,—that after dying the Tathāgata is, or is not, or both is and is not, or neither is nor is not.'[6] The *Dhammapada*[7] teaches the same notion when it refers to the Buddha as of infinite range and untraceable. The Transcendent One is not a thing or an object (*avastukaśca tathāgataḥ*) which could be discussed or described like other things of the *saṃsāra*. Hence Nāgārjuna declares: 'Those who discuss the Buddha who is beyond discussion (*prapañcātīta*) and everlasting (*avyaya*), they are destroyed by discussions, and never perceive the Transcendent One.'[8]

A *sūtra* refers to the Supremely Enlightened One as the First of all that exists (*aggaṃ sattassa sambuddhaṃ*); another *sūtra* describes the Tathāgata's great yogic potency and majesty as wonderful.[1] Śākyamuni Himself tells Vāseṭṭha that Dharmabody and Brahmabody are synonyms of the Transcendent One, that He is the Dharma-embodied and Reality-embodied.[2] The same idea of the mysterious and glorious nature of the Buddha is expressed in the following words: 'He is the Vision-embodied, Knowledge-embodied, Truth-embodied, Reality-embodied; the Speaker and Expounder (of Truth) is He; Dispenser of the Good, Giver of Immortality, the Lord of Dharma, the Transcendent One is He.'[3]

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[1] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, p. 22. English translation by Bhikkhu Khantipālo, 'The Tathāgata, O Bhikkhus . . .' in *Visākha Pūjā* (2517/1974), Bangkok, 1974, p. 22.

[2] *Avadānaśataka*, p. 47, ed. *BST*, no. 19.

[3] *Śatapañcāśatkanāma-Buddhastrotram*, verses 149, 151.

[4] *Tattvasaṃgraha*, verse 3513 and *Pañjikā*.

[5] *Tattvasaṃgraha*, verse 3549 (in Varanasi edition, verse 3550 in Baroda edition).

[6] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, II, p. 340.

[7] Verses 170-80.

[8] *Madhyamakaśāstra*, XXII, 15.

The 'Teacher of Gods and Men' is a wellknown epithet of the Buddha. The Great God, Mahā-Brahmā, was the first to invite the Buddha to teach the Dharma in the world. The Buddha had expounded the Dharma not only in the assemblies of the human beings but also in those of gods of various classes. At least at two places in the Pali Canon we are told that the Buddha had been used to visiting assemblies of angel hosts of the Four Kingly gods, of the gods of the Thirty-Three, of the Māras, and of the Brahmās. 'Now, monks, I call to mind having visited many hundreds of times an assembly of kṣatriyas, of brāhmaṇas, of householders, of ascetics, of the Four Great Kingly gods, of the gods of the Thirty-Three, of the Māras, and of the Brahmās. Before even I had seated myself among them, or had talked to them, or had engaged them in conversation, I used to become in colour like unto their colour, and in voice like unto their voice. I instructed them, incited them, roused them and pleased them with discourse on the Dharma, but they knew me not when I spoke, and asked among themselves: "Who is this who speaks, a man or a god?" Then when I had instructed, incited, roused and pleased them with discourse on the Dharma, I vanished away. But they knew me not when I had vanished away, and would question each other: "Who is this who has vanished, a man or a god?"'[4] We have seen above that He was neither a man nor a god.

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[1] *Saṃyuttanikāya*, I, p. 28.

[2] *Dīghanikāya*, III, p. 66: *Tathāgatassa hetaṃ, Vāseṭṭha, adhivacanaṃ, dhammakāyo . . . brahmakāyo . . . dhammabhūto . . . brahmabhūto.*

[3] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, IV, p. 310: *cakkhubhūto ñāṇabhūto dhammabhūto brahmabhūto vattā pavattā atthassa ninnetā amatassa dātā dhammasāmī tathāgato.*

[4] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, III, pp. 395-96 and *Dīghanikāya*, II, p. 86.

DOCTRINE OF TRIPLE BODY OF THE BUDDHA

The doctrine of Buddha's triple body (*trikāya*) is well known in the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism. The three 'bodies' or 'forms' or 'systems' (*kāya*) are: *Dharmakāya*, *Sambhogakāya*, and *Nirmāṇakāya*, the Absolute Body, the Glorious Body, and the Physical (Created) Body, respectively.

The Dharmakāya is the Ultimate Truth, the Buddhahood which is absolute and ineffable. The Sambhogakāya refers to such glorious and blissful manifestation of Buddhahood as for example is found in the famous *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*. A ray of light (*raśmi*) issuing from His *ūrṇā*, the circle between the eyebrows of the Glorious One, the *sūtra* says, illuminates many hundred thousands of Buddhafields and all the beings in all the states of existence become visible.[1] Such is the glory of Buddha when He manifests as Sambhogakāya.

The Nirmāṇakāya is the Human Body such as that of Śākyamuni which appeared in the world in sixth-fifth centuries BC. The thirty-two major and eighty minor marks are found in Sambhogakāya as well as in Nirmāṇakāya. The ten powers, four convictions, eighteen extraordinary attributes, all perfections, etc., are associated with these Glorious and Assumed Bodies. Their purpose is to teach the Dharma and lead living beings towards Buddhahood. The Great Compassion of the Dharmakāya creates these forms for the benefit of Bodhisattvas, gods, non-gods, humans, etc. The concept of the plurality of Buddhas is due to these manifestations of the one ultimate Principle or Dharma.

A high authority on Mahāyānism says that 'We may regard the Dharmakāya as corresponding to the Christian idea of Godhead.' 'The essence of Buddhahood is the Dharmakāya, but as long as the Buddha remains such, there is no hope for the salvation of a world of particulars. The Buddha has to abandon his original abode, and must take upon himself such forms as are conceivable and acceptable to the inhabitants of this earth. The Holy Spirit emanates, as it were, from Absolute Buddhahood and is seen by those who are prepared by their previous karma to see him.'[2]

The belief entertained by some modern writers that the doctrine of Three Bodies is a later Mahāyānian innovation is not wholly correct. The Mahāyāna masters only systematized and philosophized the ideas already existing in the oldest available *sūtras*.

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[1] *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, ed. *BST*, no. 6, p. 3.

[2] D.T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, pp. 308, 310.

We have seen that the Pali Canon expounds the notion of Dharmakāya as the Ultimate Reality wholly transcendental to time, space and phenomenon. This Dharmakāya is later on systematically interpreted as a metaphysical principle. The Pali Canon says so much about the Physical Body of the Buddha Śākyamuni, the Nirmāṇakāya. Then, the Pali Canon also describes the Sambhogakāya when the Buddha is described as visiting heavens and gods by assuming or conjuring magical, glorious bodies. How else could He instruct and gladden the gods, Māras, and Brahmās? The roots of the theory of triple body are thus already there in the Theravāda scriptures. The instruction to Vakkali has the term 'Corruptible Body' (*pūtikāya*) for Assumed Human Body, while the monk was advised to concentrate on the Absolute Body (Dhammakāya). The *Mahāparinibbānasutta* says, as we saw above, that Buddha's mind-made bodies had the same colour and same voice as that of His celestial audiences. The hearers could not know who thus spoke, a man or a god? This was the seed of the idea of Sambhogakāya.

The Sarvāstivādins had further developed these ideas. They used the word Rūpakāya or 'Material Body,' a consequence (*vipāka*) of past *karma*. It was a 'vile' though extraordinary body. They used the word Nirmānakāya or 'Fictitious Body' for what later on was called Sambhogakāya. The third body was the Dharmakāya which consisted of Morality, Meditation, Wisdom, Liberation, and the Cognition and Vision of Liberation. The *Divyāyadāna* refers to these bodies.[1]

It is not clear whether the doctrine of three bodies (*trikāya*) was in some way related to the doctrine of three spheres (*tridhātu*): Formless Realm, Realm of Form, and the Realm of Desire, well known in all strata of the Pali Canon. In the Tantras we find that the Absolute is viewed as the unity of three mysteries: Body (*kāya*), Speech (*vāk*), and Mind (*citta*).[2]

Before the Mahayanists systematized Buddhological hints contained in the texts of Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda, the Mahāsāṃghikas had developed some remarkable theories. The 'Elders' or Sthaviras had subordinated the historical Buddha to Dharmakāya, the metaphysical Absolute. The Mahāsāṃghikas stepped further on and declared that everything physical, personal and historical was quite incompatible with the Real Buddha who was wholly Transcendental or Supramundane (*lokottara*). The Historical Buddha was only a magical creation of the Transcendent One. Similar magical or fictitious Buddhas fill the entire universe; they are not rare as the Theras believed. The Real Buddha, free from birth and death, omniscient, absolutely compassionate, was ever in trance. The Buddhology of the Mahāsāṃghika school thus confirmed not only the absolutistic theory of Buddhahood, it also put the doctrine of *avatāra*, of Buddha's descent, on a rational footing.[1]

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[1] *Divyāvadāna*, Darbhanga, 1959, pp. 11, 254 etc.

[2] See *Guhyasamājatantra*, Darbhanga, 1965.

The doctrine of the triple body of Buddha is taught in several Mahāyāna texts and has been discussed by several modern scholars so that we can leave it here.[2] A discussion of the conception of Buddha-*kṣetra* has to be omitted here owing to the shortage of space.[3]

THE ABSOLUTE AND THE TATHĀGATA

The Buddhist term for the Absolute is *asaṃskṛta*, Pali *asaṃkhata*. It is called Unborn, Unbecome, Uncreated, and Unconditioned (*ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṃkhataṃ*).[4] Its most famous name in Buddhism is Nirvāṇa; three of its synonyms are Dharma, Śānti and Satya, Reality, Peace and Truth. He who attains Nirvāṇa-Dharma goes beyond the five states of existence, transcends the *saṃsāra*, and is called Tathāgata, the Transcendent One. It is in this Dharma that the Buddhists take refuge;[5] it is the Supreme Good (*paramārtha*).

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[1] *Mahāvastu*, I, (ed. *BST*, no. 14), pp. 32-37, 127ff.

[2] See D.T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, pp. 308ff. Sangharakshita, *The Three Jewels*, pp. 35-43; Nalinaksha Dutt, *Aspects of Mahāyāna and its Relation to Hīnayāna*, London, 1930, pp. 98ff. Two of the texts referring to the Budddha-bodies are *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, *BST*, no. 13, pp. 47-48; and *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-Ālokavyākhyā*, ed. *BST*, no. 4, pp. 376, 537. The Materials of the *Laṃkāvatārasūtra* are discussed by D.T. Suzuki, op. cit.

[3] See Teresina Rowell, 'The Background and Early Use of the Buddha-Kṣetra Concept' in *The Eastern Buddhist*, VI, no. 3, 1934, pp. 199-246; ibid, VI, no. 4, 1935, pp. 379-431; ibid, VII, no. 2, 1937, pp. 132-76.

[4] *Udāna* VIII. 3.6 (in *Khuddakanikāya*, I, p. 163); quoted by Candrakīrti in *Catuḥśatakavṛtti*, IX. 19, p. 56.

[5] *Prasannapadā* on XVII. 1, p. 132, (ed. in *BST*, no. 10) pāñcagatikaśaṃsāragamana-vidhāraṇārthena nirvāṇe dharma iti ucyate, dharmaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchatītyatra.

The Supreme Good is the Uncreated 'Thing-in-itself;' by attaining it all illusions, habit-energies, rebirth, and passions are destroyed; its synonyms are Dharma-Element, Reality-Limit, Suchness, Voidness, Absence of own being of all things, etc.[1]

Dharma is also conceived of as the immanent, eternal, uncreated, order of the law of the universe. The law of *karma*, moral causation, conditioned coproduction, the real nature of things as it is, the orderliness (*dharmatā*) or the nature of the conditioned things, are comprehended within this conception of universal Dharma. Regardless of the appearance or non-appearance of Tathāgatas, this state of things, this established order of things, this fixed causal law of things, is firmly established, namely, that all compounded phenomena are impermanent, ill, and not-self. This *dharmatā* or Regulative Law is also called Suchness, Thusness, Reality, Conditioned Coproduction, etc.[2]

We have seen above that Buddha is identical with Dharma; here Buddha means the Transcendent One, not His corruptible body. In other words, Buddha is the Dharmakāya, the true Refuge, the eternal essence of Buddhahood. The Buddhists take refuge in this metaphysical principle called Buddha. The historical Buddha is thus subordinate to the Dharma; Gautama Buddha was no founder of the Dharma. He was its Discoverer; He was the channel through which the Dharma was made known; He revealed the Dharma to us. The ultimate reality of the Dharma or Nirvāṇa or Dharmakāya does not depend on the Buddha or the 'person' called Buddha. But our knowledge of the Dharma depends on His revelation, hence we honour Him and praise Him. He sounded the drum of the True Dharma in this world enveloped by false notions and darkness. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Him for His compassion in revealing to us the Inexpressible Dharma. Buddhist love (*bhakti*) and adoration (*pūjā*) have to be understood in this perspective.

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[1] *Bodhicaryāvatāra-Pañjikā* on IX. 2, p. 171: paramārthaḥ akṛtrimaṃ vasturūpaṃ yadadhigamāt sarvāvṛtivāsanānusandhikleśaprahāṇam bhavati sarvadharmāṇāṃ niḥasvabhāvatā śūnyatā tathatā bhūtakoṭi dharmadhātuḥ ityādi paryāyāḥ.

[2] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, I, p. 266; Sanskrit version in *Śālistambasūtra*, (ed. in *BST*, no. 17), p. 101: utpādādvā tathāgatānām anutpādādvā sthiti eva eṣā dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā yāvadaiṣā dharmatā dharma sthititā dharmaniyāmatā pratītyasamutpādasamatā tathatā aviparītatathatā ananyatathatā bhūtatā satyatā aviparītatā aviparyayatā.

Edward Conze has observed that 'The actual living Buddha is a combination of the impersonal metaphysical principle of Dharma with a vile body.'[1] In other words, the human and historical Buddha was a hierophany or an earthly manifestation of the Dharmakāya. This hierophany was due to the Great Compassion which is a constitutive essence of the Absolute. It will be an error to suppose that the Dharmakāya or the Absolute divides itself. As D.T. Suzuki says: 'In fact the Tathāgata is not at all dividing himself; if it seems so, it is due to the discrimination of his devotees. The Transformation Body is thus a creation on their part, it is not an emanation of the Tathāgata.'[2]

Those who believe that the later Buddhists forgot the historic teacher and fabricated mythical Buddhas are thus far removed from an understanding of the spiritual dimensions of Buddhist religious quest. The numerous Buddhas are numerous hierophanies of the one and the same ultimate Dharmakāya. Śākyamuni Buddha's historical or human existence has a relevance and meaning only for us who inhabit this world; His physical personality should be viewed as a reflection of the moon in the water; the one moon is reflected in as many forms as there are waters in different places. But the moon reflected in a particular lake is not the only or the real moon. Likewise the historic Buddha represented an aspect of the Dharmakāya or Dharmatābuddha. He did not exhaust the Inexhaustible.

Numerous ancient texts teach the central Buddhist notion that the Ultimate Reality or the Tathāgata is not to be mistaken as a duality or something that is phenomenal or conditioned. The Ultimate Reality or the Tathāgata is timeless, has no form, no sound, no abode, no marks whatsoever. Buddhahood, as Swami Vivekananda says, is not a person or a place. It is that mysterious, glorious, ineffable and unthinkable Absolute which transcends all that is within human limitations. The name Buddha and the person called (historic) Buddha are mere symbols of that Transcendent One (*Tathāgata*) which is identical with Non-Dual Gnosis (*jñānamadvayaṃ*).[3]

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[1] Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, p. 171; cf. Susumu Yamaguchi, *Dynamic Buddha and Static Buddha*, Tokyo, 1958, p. 84.

[2] D.T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Lankāvatārasūtra*, p. 355.

[3] Dignāga in *Prajñāpāramitā-Piṇḍārtha*, verse 1, (ed. in *BST*, no. 4) p. 263; *prajñāpāramitā jñānam advayaṃ sā tathāgataḥ*.

Two verses in the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* sum up this central conception of Buddhism in the following words:

Those who by My form did see Me,
And those who followed Me by voice,
Wrong the efforts they engaged in,
Me those people will not see.
From the Dharma one should see the Buddhas,
From the Dharmabodies comes their guidance.
Yet Dharma's true nature cannot be discerned,
And no one can be conscious of it as an object.[1]

The transcendental Dharmakāya can be realized by following the way (*mārga*) taught by the Human Buddha. The Buddhists find God's alternative in the Dharmakāya in which there is neither Nirvāṇa nor *saṃsāra*. Here a living being finds that Immortal Realm (*amṛta-dhātu*), in which personality is extinguished and unreality destroyed. It is the 'Real Existence' (*bhūta*), neither mine nor yours.[2] To attain this 'Existence' or Reality is the goal of Buddhism. Śākyamuni attained this. All beings can attain this. This is the message of Buddhism.

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[1] *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, 26 a-b.

Translation by Edward Conze as modified by Sangharakshita, *Selected Sayings From the Perfection of Wisdom*, London, 1955, p. 111; *The Three Jewels*, p. 41. The Sanskrit text may be seen in *Mahāyānasūtra saṃgraha*, I (*BST*, no. 17), p. 87. These verses are quoted in the *Prasannapadā*, p. 195; *Ālokavyākhyā*, p. 366; and *Catuḥśatakavṛtti*, p. 179.

[2] *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, ed. by E. Conze, Rome 1962, see p. 94, *amṛtā dhātu*, p. 168 *bhūto artho buddha iti ucyate*.

Conze translates thus: 'He is called "Buddha" as the truly real fact,' ibid, p. 363.

CHAPTER VII

The Legacy of Buddhism

This *study* of Buddhism in Indian history and culture may be concluded with a brief survey of the legacy of Buddhism in India. In his speeches and writings, Vivekananda occasionally speaks of the contributions made by the Buddha and Buddhism towards Indian thought. In this chapter an attempt will be made to point out the impact of Buddhism, if any, on the life and thought of Vivekananda, and to review his estimate of the Buddhist legacy in India and of Buddhist influence on Judeo-Christian tradition. This will then be supplemented by a summary of the views of some Hindu scholars on Buddhist contributions to Indian thought and culture.

BUDDHISM AND VEDĀNTA

We have seen in chapter III that Vivekananda's elequent praise of Lord Buddha remains unsurpassed in all modern writings. He has praised the Buddha as the greatest among all the prophets and founders of world religions. Śākyamuni's renunciation of the royal throne and of all the pleasures available to a prince had a deep impact on our Swami. The virtue of renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) is praised by him to the skies. According to him it is the basis of all ethics; the Buddha was an embodiment of renunciation and perfect self-annihilation.[1] Although the ascetic ideal or the philosophy of renunciation had long been an essential part of the Vedantic tradition to which he belonged, Vivekananda is right in tracing it to the influence of the Buddha. The Vedānta like Buddhism teaches the ideal of renunciation; there is in reality 'no antagonism' between Buddhism and Vedānta. The special doctrine of Vivekananda is that the Buddha was the true teacher of real Vedānta. The Vedic priests had guarded Vedānta as a secret treasure of a privileged class; they did not allow it to come to the people. 'By the mercy

[1] *Complete Works*, I, pp. 424-25; II, pp. 62-63.

of the Lord, the Buddha came and preached it to the masses.'[1]

The caste-ridden Vedic religion of the priests had degenerated into a kind of 'materialism' and India's spiritual wealth was on the brink of disappearance. It was at such a critical juncture in Indian history that the Great Master, the teacher of equality, compassion and renunciation, appeared on the scene. We cannot withhold our tribute of respect and admiration for Vivekananda when he remarks that the '*Buddha brought the Vedānta to light, gave it to the people, and saved India.*' The Vedānta which is called 'The crest-jewel' of all philosophical thought, was thus made radiant by the radiance of the Buddha.

It should be mentioned here that the history of Vedantic interpretation of Buddhism does not begin with Vivekananda. It began with Gauḍapāda (*circa* 7th century AD) and with the acceptance of the Buddha as an *avatāra* of God or Viṣṇu in the early Purāṇa texts. It was Gauḍapāda, the author of the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā*, and a putative grand-teacher of Śaṃkara, the most famous *advaita* philosopher, who had endeavoured to build a harmonious bridge of understanding between the Mahāyānian and Upaniṣadic thoughts. He had shown, in his own way, that there was no disagreement between Vedānta and Buddhism; he had paved the way for Śaṃkara's advaitic interpretation of the Vedānta. The *advaita* turn in Vedānta, according to some authorities, was due to the Buddhist influence.[2]

Brahmanical commentators of the Vedānta who came after Śaṃkara were quick to discern the Buddhistic contents and techniques in Vedānta and charged Śaṃkara of being 'a crypto-Buddhist' (*pracchanna-bauddha*). Vivekananda knows this view of later Vedāntins and cites Vijñānabhikṣu as an instance. He admits that 'Shankara's movement has entirely swallowed up and assimilated' the ancient school of ascetic thought, especially Buddhism. The *Padmapurāṇa* mentions Buddhist thought (*bauddha-śāstra*) as a false system, associates the theory of *māyā* ('illusion,' 'appearance' or 'phenomenal existence') with the Buddhists and refers to 'the Buddhists in disguise' (*pracchanna-bauddha*) as their protagonists. The reference is possibly to the teachers of *advaita* Vedānta and we are led to conclude that the philosophical tenet of *māyā* was taken over from Buddhism and brought within the fold of the Vedānta.[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, II, p. 138.

[2] See S.N. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1926, I, p. 422; L.M. Joshi, 'Gauḍapāda' Rapprochement between Buddhism and Vedānta' in *Ṛitam: Journal of Akhila Bhāratiya Sanskrit Parishad*, I, no. 1, Lucknow, 1969, pp. 11-22; *The Āgamaśāstra of Gauḍapāda*, edited and translated into English and Sanskrit by V. Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1943, 1950. The publications of R.D. Karmarkar, *Gauḍpādakārikā*, edited with an Introduction and translated into English, Poona, 1953, and of T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda*: *A Study in Early Advaita*, Madras, 1960, seem to have aimed at criticising the settled fact of Buddhist influence on Advaita Vedānta. Mahadevan's treatment of Buddhism shows confusion about Buddhist doctrines. See e.g. p. 229 and note 111 of his work where he gives a wrong reference to and completely mistakes the meaning of the classical Pali passage; *viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ*. This passage, says he, is a condemnation of Vijñānavāda-Vedānta!

THE INCLUSIVENESS OF BRAHMANISM

The secret of the seemingly everlasting persistence and vitality of the Vedic-Brahmanic religion lies in its strong tendency to assimilate doctrinal and practical elements from all the other races, cultures and religions. This fact is acknowledged and stressed by Vivekananda. 'We have no quarrel,' says he, 'with any religion in the world'; 'our religion,' he goes on, 'is one of inclusion of everyone, exclusion of none.'[2] The *Bhagavadgītā* is often cited as an authority for this approach. It has been declared in this text that all men worship the same God:

> In whatsoever way any come to Me,
> In that same way I grant them favor.
> My path follow
> Men altogether, son of Pṛthā.[3]

Accordingly, the Hindus could worship not only Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, and Hanumāna but also the Buddha and Kapila whose teachings had nothing in common with those of the ancient Vedic texts. Incarnations and messengers of God are most welcome to this universal pantheon; even their alternatives, those that are not God's incarnations or messengers but are liberated ones in their own right, are most welcome. 'The Hindu can worship any sage and any saint from any country whatsoever . . . '; this universal religion 'is inclusive enough, it is broad enough to include all the ideals.'[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 325, see also Asoka Chatterjee, *Padma Purāṇa—A Study*, Calcutta, 1967, p. 90.

[2] *Complete Works*, III, p. 132.

[3] *Bhagavadgītā*, IV. 11, trans. by Franklin Edgerton, New York, 1964.

Few other modern Hindus have so gracefully acknowledged the indebtedness of their tradition to Buddhism as has been done by Swami Vivekananda. Among all the modern great Indian leaders and intellectuals he stands out eminently as an authentic spokesman of Hinduism who has never made an attempt to underestimate the role played by Buddhism in India's history. He is also aware that the Hindus, strongly attached to their Brahmanical tradition, do not acknowledge their debt to Buddhist ideas and ideals. For example, he says that '*what we call the Advaita philosophy of the modern school has a great many conclusions of the Buddhists.* Of course, the Hindus will not admit that—that is the orthodox Hindus, because to them the Buddhists are heretics. But there is a conscious attempt to stretch out the whole doctrine to include the heretics also . . . The Vedānta has no quarrel with Buddhism. The idea of Vedānta is to harmonise all. With the Northern Buddhists we have no quarrel at all.'[2]

BRAHMANICAL ASSIMILATION OF BUDDHISM

The Brahmanical assimilation of Mahāyāna transformed not only Upaniṣadic Vedānta into advaita Vedānta but also helped the development of Vaiṣṇavism. Vivekananda's observation on the evolution of Vaiṣṇavism is as follows: 'Buddhism and Vaishnavism are not two different things. *During the decline of Buddhism in India, Hinduism took from her a few cardinal tenets of conduct and made them her own, and these have now come to be known as Vaishnavism.*'[3] This is a subject on which one can write a full-length monograph.

According to Vivekananda, the medieval reactions and reforms within the Brahmanical tradition were inspired by Buddhism. Not only Śaṃkara but also Rāmānuja converted many of the followers of Jainism and Buddhism to Hinduism. The reactionary and reformatory movements of Kumārila (7th century AD), Śaṃkara (9th century AD) and Rāmānuja (11th century AD) had a twofold aim; criticism and condemnation of certain doctrines of Buddhism on the one hand, and assimilation of certain doctrines of Buddhism, on the other hand. This movement had a twofold consequence: the decline of Buddhism on the one hand, and the swelling up of the already heterogeneous body of Puranic Brahmanism on the other hand; 'that vast accumulation of sects and doctrines and rituals called Hinduism' as Vivekananda puts it. '*For the last thousand years or more its great task has been assimilation*, with now and then an outburst of reformation.'[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 252.

[2] ibid, V, pp. 279-80.

[3] ibid, p. 401.

THE SPIRIT OF RENUNCIATION

Mention has already been made above of the impact of Buddhist stress on ascetic life and renunciation on the religions of India. Vivekananda repeatedly points out that the Buddha had preached the 'monastic vow' all over India. He had deeply impressed on the mind of India that ideal of renunciation. Since His time, India has recognized *vairāgya* and *saṃnyāsa* as high ideals of religious life. '*Hinduism has absorbed into itself this Buddhist spirit of renunciation*.' A large number of ancient Buddhist monasteries and sanctuaries are in the hands of Brahmanical or Vedāntic monks and priests in modern times. They were forcibly taken over from the Buddhists and modified by the Hindus during the process of the decline of Buddhism. Thus the tradition of monastic ideas and of monastic abodes of the Brahmanical monks are traced to Buddhist religion. According to our Swami, the very institution of *saṃnyāsa* started with the Buddha. It is true that the Buddha Śākyamuni was one of the first historical *samnyāsins*.

When Swami Ramakrishnananda referred to the Dharmaśāstras and the Purāṇas as authorities for pre-Buddhist antiquity of the four stages (*āśramas*) including the fourth, the *saṃnyāsa* or ascetic stage, Swami Vivekananda, like a critical historian, declared: 'Most of the Purāṇas, the codes of Manu and others, as well as much of the *Mahābhārata* form but recent literature. Bhagavān Buddha was much earlier than all that.' Admonishing his fellow-*sādhus*, he observed: 'Please read history, and you will find that *Hinduism has become so great only by absorbing the ideas of Buddha . . . We have to admit that in the midst of the profound darkness of the ancient times, Buddha only shines forth as a figure radiant with the light of knowledge*.'[2]

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[1] *Complete Works*, VI, p. 164.
[2] ibid, pp. 507-09.

Buddhism passed away from India only apparently; really it did not pass away; it lived on in reformed Brahmanism. The Buddhist ideal of renunciation has remained the highest religious ideal in 'the land of Buddha.' The world-conquering message of the Buddha 'had melted away into modern Hinduism,' and 'Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism.' The Buddha's doctrine thus remains to this day the banner of India.

A German orientalist named Gustav Oppert had expressed the view that the *śiva-liṅga* was a phallic emblem of the male while the *śālagrāma-śilā* was an emblem of the *yoni* or female generative principle. Swami Vivekananda was the first to criticise these views. He held that the origin of the *liṅga-worship* should be traced to Vedic *yūpa-skambha* or sacrificial post. The practice of making and worshipping the *śālagrāma-śilās* current among the Vaiṣṇavas, he thought, may have been derived from the Buddhist practice of erecting and venerating the memorial topes or *stūpas*. He mentions the Buddhist technical term *dhātu-garbha* and translates it as 'metal-wombed.' This translation is literal to the point of meaninglessness. The word *dhātugarbha* (Pali *dhātugabbha*, Sinhalese *dāgaba*) means a 'relic-chamber' or the innermost part of a *stūpa* containing the relic-casket. The numerous examples of *yoni* and *liṅga* discovered at many prehistoric sites in India including those connected with the Harappan culture, suggest that the use of these emblems for religious purposes was possibly of pre-Vedic origin.

Swami Vivekananda[1] believed that the worship of Śiva antedated the Buddhists, that the Buddhists made their sacred places near the seats of Śiva-worship such as Bodhagayā and Sāranātha (Vārāṇasī), and that the Tibetans and other Northern Buddhists have been coming to these places to worship Śiva.[2] All these views are anachronistic and should not be taken seriously. Śiva is possibly a non-Āryan deity adopted by Puranic Brahmanism. It is believed by modern scholars that the Vedic god Rudra is of non-Āryan origin. It was during the post-Mauryan epoch that the theistic sect of Śaivism emerged and it was an amalgamation of Vedic and non-Vedic elements of ideology and worship. We can say that some seeds of Śaivism are older than Buddhism. The figure of an ascetic or *yogin*, three-faced or perhaps four-faced, seated in a Yogic posture and surrounded by animal figures, found on one of the Harappan seals, has been often taken to be a proto-type of Śiva of historic Brahmanism. But the figure can also be taken to be that of a pre-Vedic *muni* or ascetic sage. An important objection to calling it a proto-type of *paśupati*, 'lord of beasts,' an epithet of Puranic Śiva, is that a figure of the bull (*nandin*), an attribute of Śiva-Mahādeva, is not found on the seal, although bull is commonly represented on other seals. At any rate, it seems that the cult of Śiva in historic times had grown by assimilating diverse elements of faith and iconography originating in prehistoric and Vedic as well as non-Vedic circles. But there is no evidence to suppose that Vārāṇasī and Gayā were Śaiva seats before the fourth or third century BC. While Vārāṇasī was already a famous city in the age of the Buddha, Gayā or Bodhagayā became famous only after Śākyamuni had sanctified its soil. The Śaivas occupied this area during the medieval period. The Buddhists from all parts of Asia have been visiting Sāranātha and Bodhagayā because these are their holy places and not because of Śaivaite establishments which in these places are not older than the Gupta period.

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[1] *Complete Works*, IV, pp. 422-25.

[2] ibid, V, pp. 171, 174.

HINDUISM IS POST-BUDDHISTIC

The Swami is perfectly justified in saying that 'Modern Hinduism is largely Paurāṇika, that is post-Buddhistic in origin.'[1] The theistic sects of Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śāktism, the development of devotion (*bhakti*) and worship (*pūjā*), temples and images, the doctrine of *avatāra*, the reverence for the cow, the prestige of vegetarian diet, the emphasis on the principle of *ahiṃsā*, the opposition to and almost disappearance of animal sacrifices, the idea of giving equality of opportunity in religious and devotional matters to women and *śūdras*, all these features of medieval and modern Hinduism are post-Buddhist and non-Vedic in origin.

THE COW AS MOTHER

The 'Buddha dealt a blow at animal sacrifice from which India has never recovered, and Buddha said: "Kill no cows" and cow-killing is an impossibility with us.'[2] At numerous places in the Buddhist scriptures we find the Buddha criticising the sacrificial slaughter of animals including bulls, cows and calves by the rich and learned brāhmaṇas of His age.[1] The notion of the cow as mother (*gomātā*) was introduced by the Buddha; He for the first time in history taught the idea of respect for the cow. It is in a Buddhist canonical text, the *Suttanipāta* that the Indians will first find this idea: 'Like as our mother, father, brother, kin, cows are our greatest friends from whom balm comes; they give us food and strength, beauty and joy.' The Buddha taught that the true brāhmaṇas of ancient times 'killed no cows.'[2] The famous discourses of the Buddha, collected in the *Suttanipāta* and the *Dhammapada*,[3] are exclusively concerned with setting forth the real virtues (*dharma*) of true brāhmaṇas. The moral principles and spiritual ideals of true brāhmaṇas taught by the Buddha were lacking in the Brahmanism of His age but later on became the essential elements of Epic and Puranic Brahmanism.

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[1] *Complete Works*, V, p . 229.
[2] ibid, V, p. 226.

VEGETARIANISM

Vivekananda says that in pre-Buddhist India large numbers of animals were sacrificed and people drank wine and ate meat in large quantities, and that 'since Buddha's teaching drunkenness has almost disappeared, and killing of animals has almost gone.'[4] This, of course, sounds exaggerated. Drinking of wine and eating of meat and fish have been greatly lessened in India since the spread of Buddhism and Jainism. With the growth and popularity of Sramanic ethics and with the emergence of Vaiṣṇavism aversion to drinking wines and interest in vegetarian food became increasingly powerful. But the abuses of the Tāntrika tenet of an 'adept' (*siddha*) being beyond good and evil and the coming of the Muslims in India may be said to have again promoted the consumption of *māṃsa* (meat) and *madya* (wine). The killing of animals for sacrifice, however, became largely confined to a few royal families; but some times even commoners, with means at their disposal, thought it fit to kill an animal for sacrifice to a deity. Even today, the Śaiva and the Śākta Hindus of India and Nepal have not abandoned the sacrificial killing of animals. The modern Buddhists, let it be added here, are not all vegetarians; they do not kill an animal for sacrifice nor for food; but many Buddhists regularly eat meat and fish. There are some Buddhists who are strict vegetarians and do their best to observe the precept of harmlessness (*ahiṃsā*) which heads the list of Buddhist moral precepts. The Jainas and some sections of the Vaiṣṇavas have also promoted vegetarianism.

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[1] Vide *Dīghanikāya*, I, *Kūṭadantasutta*, Eng. trans. in *Dialogues of the Buddha*, part I.

[2] E.M. Hare, *Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists*, verses 296-97, p. 45.

[3] Chapter 26.

[4] *Complete Works*, V, p. 311.

TEMPLES AND IMAGES

According to Vivekananda the images and temples of Brahmanical gods were inspired by Buddhist models. 'First, there was the *chaitya*; second, the *stūpa*; and then came the temple of Buddha. Alongwith it arose the temples of the Hindu deities.'[1] This view is quite in agreement with the findings of modern historians of Indian art and architecture. The word *caitya* means a sacred emblem, a funerary monument, an attribute of the Buddha, for example, a tree, such as the Bodhivṛkṣa; *caitya* is a religious term which generally means a Buddhist shrine or sanctuary. The term *stūpa* means a Buddhist mound containing the relics (*dhātus*) such as ashes, bones, etc. either of the Buddha or of any other sage of Buddhist tradition. *Stūpa* is an architectural term and is usually treated with veneration as a memorial symbol. The Buddhists had started the veneration of *caityas* and *stūpas* as early as the fifth century before Christ. Emperor Aśoka is famed in tradition as a builder of numerous *stūpas*. The Pali *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* recommends the construction and adoration of *stūpas*.

It is possible that the custom of making images of the Buddha was inspired by Buddha-*bhakti*, seeds of which are found in the Pali Tripiṭaka. A section of early Buddhists liked to adore the *caityas* or holy symbols such as the Bodhi tree, the wheel (*cakra*), the lion-seat (*siṃhāsana*), the umbrella, the foot-prints and the begging-bowl of the Buddha. The early sculptures of Bharahut and Sāñchī and of Bodhagayā do not show the Buddha in human form. He is represented through these symbols. Perhaps it was believed that the Exalted One (*bhagavat*) was 'neither a god nor a man'; incomprehensible even while alive, the Tathāgata became much more so after the dissolution of His physical frame. How could such a Being be portrayed in human-form? This, however, is a Buddhological question which requires a detailed discussion. Ānanda

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[1] *Complete Works*, V, p. 316.

K. Coomaraswamy was of the opinion that the *yakṣa* figures of the second century BC had supplied the prototype of the earliest *bodhisattva* figures found from Mathurā.

BHAKTI AND PUJA

The needs of *bhakti* and *pūjā* led the Buddhists to manufacture the images of the Buddha in human form. The Buddhist art and iconography of the last three centuries before Christ should be studied in the light of the Pali and Sanskrit *Avadānas* and the earliest *Mahāyānasūtras*. The beginnings of historical Vaiṣṇavism can be traced to the same period. Two religious classics of the first century BC are the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*. The former shows the emergence of theistic Vedānta with a strong devotional strand centred around Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, the latter reflects the emergence of a profound Buddhology with equally strong emphasis on Buddha's *pūjā* and *bhakti*. While there is no Vaiṣṇava sculpture corresponding to the Kṛṣṇaism of the *Gītā* assignable to this period, the Mahāyānism of the Lotus *sūtra* can be illustrated with the help of the Buddhist art of the period. The Vaiṣṇava pantheon and mythology begin to get an impressive expression in plastic form during the rule of the Gupta kings in Northern India. The growth of Buddhist art and architecture had preceded that of Brahmanical art and architecture by several centuries. Several elements of Buddhist sculpture and iconography of the historic period are traceable to the prehistoric art of Harappā and Mohenjodaro. The tradition of animal symbolism, for example, is of Harappan origin. The Harappans had also manufactured the figures of human beings of some sort of religious affiliation: In historic times, it is in the circles of the Jainas and the Buddhists that we first encounter the images of the Jinas and the Buddhas. Vivekananda says that the use of images was unknown in India before the Buddhists. 'I say they (the Buddhists) were the first to use images.'[1]

DECLINE OF BUDDHISM: THE BUDDHA AS VISNU

Although Brahmanical Hindus found it hard to accept many of the Buddhist doctrines, they assimilated a considerable body of the philosophical, moral and social ideas of Buddhism. Even the very Buddha was accepted as an incarnation of God and worshipped as such. The assimilation of Buddhism by Brahmanical sects and schools has been interpreted as a major cause of the decline of Buddhism in its homeland. Brahmanism, as Charles Eliot has remarked, killed Buddhism by a fraternal embrace. In the opinion of Swami Vivekananda, 'Hinduism threw away Buddhism after taking its sap.'[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 533.

In the sacred writings of Neo-Brahmanism one encounters a strange paradoxical situation, viz., a systematic assimilation as well as a sustained condemnation of Buddhism. As the present writer had observed in 1967, while Brahmanism reshaped itself into Hinduism, Buddhism began to recede into the background. 'Considerably refined and enriched by constant contacts with Buddhist ideals and practices, and re-modelled according to the new circumstances brought about by the growth and popularity of Śramanic ideologies for centuries, Brahmanism now emerged, under its Puranic garb as the undisputed national 'Hindu' culture. In the twofold process of assimilation and condemnation of Buddhism, the Brahmanical priests sacrificed at the altar of mythical Viṣṇu even the most historical and overwhelmingly non-Brahmanical personality of the Buddha and mystified the historical existence of Buddhism as a delusive trick of a Puranic God.'[2]

While many modern Hindus may justly boast of Brahmanical tolerance and acceptance of Buddhism and say that they worship even that Śākyamuni whose followers denied God and the Veda, the historian of religion looks at this phenomenon from a different angle also. Commenting on the Brahmanical admission of the Buddha as the ninth *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, the historian R.C. Majumdar has made the following observation: 'This well-conceived and bold stroke of policy cut the ground from under the feet of Buddhism which was already steadily losing ground and the ultimate result was the complete effacement of Buddhism from India as a separate sect.'[3]

The Brahmanical Purāṇas which declared the Buddha as an *avatāra* of God also invented the fiction that this form was assumed by the Lord with a view to misleading and ruining the *asuras* or 'demons' i.e. the Buddhist followers. The Vaiṣṇavas or the Bhāgavatas in particular paid homage to the Buddha in the following words: *namo buddhāya śuddhāya dāityadānava mohine*, 'Homage to the Buddha, the Pure One, who illuded the devils and the demons!'[1] Swami Vivekananda knows this aspect of the Brahmanical attitude to Buddha-*avatāra* and does not forgive the Brahmanical priests for their unholy story. In a letter to Alasinga, the Swami wrote the following: 'Lord once more came to you as Buddha and taught you how to feel, how to sympathise with the poor, the miserable, the sinner, but you heard Him not. Your priests invented the horrible story that Lord was here for deluding demons with false doctrines! True indeed, but we are the demons, not those that believed.'[2] I do not know of any other important Hindu teacher or scholar who has exposed this fact of the history of the relationship between Buddhism and the Vaiṣṇavaite Purāṇas so forcefully. Swami Vivekananda occasionally attained a degree of impartiality in his treatment of Buddhism which has not been equalled by any other modern Hindu author.

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[1] *Complete Works*, VI, p. 104.

[2] *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, p. xiii.

[3] *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Calcutta, 1956, IV, p. 40.

WAR AGAINST CASTEISM

All those Brahmanical *ācāryas* and reformers who organized countrywide crusades against Buddhism including Uddyotakara, Kumārila, Śaṃkara and Rāmānuja, were 'caste-makers.' In their efforts to re-establish the authority of the Vedas and the supremacy of the brāhmaṇas, they re-established the caste-system against which the Buddhists had stood for centuries.[3] The opinion of Swami Vivekananda finds support, among others, in Arnold Toynbee, who remarks that 'If either Buddhism or Jainism had succeeded in captivating the Indic World, caste might have been got rid of. As it turned out, however, the role of universal church in the last chapter of the Indic decline and fall was played by Hinduism, a parvenu archaistic syncretism of things new and old; and one of the old things to which Hinduism gave a new lease of life was caste.'[4]

BROTHERHOOD OF MANKIND

The equality of man or the universal brotherhood of mankind has been taught by several religions. The distinction of Buddhism, according to Vivekananda, is that its founder was the first to preach this great idea.[1]

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[1] *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, X. 40.22; of also ibid, I.3.24.

[2] *Complete Works*, V, p. 14.

[3] ibid, III, pp. 293, 296.

[4] Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, I, abridgement by D.C. Somervell, New York, 1969, p. 350.

RELIGION OF PEACE

Above all, Buddhism has been a religion of peace, compassion and reason. It was the first missionary religion of the world; it spread its message far and wide and without antagonizing any other religious community. Generally, the Swami is very critical of the Buddhists, but he is always ready to praise whenever praise is due to them. Referring to the peaceful spread of Buddhist ideas and ideals in the world, he remarks: 'To their credit it must be said (that) they never took the sword to preach religion. Excepting the Buddhistic religion, there is not one religion in the world which could make one step without bloodshed.'[2] He appreciates the organized and disciplined community of monks, in which even voting by ballot was practiced five centuries before Christ. The idea of the 'church,' he says, originated with the Buddha.[3]

THE FIRST WORLD RELIGION

The Swami was one of the first to use the phrase 'Buddhistic India.' T.W. Rhys Davids had kept *Buddhist India* as the title of one of his historical works. The whole of India never completely became Buddhist. By 'Buddhist India' we have to understand those centuries in the history of India in which the Buddhist ideas and institutions had a pre-eminent position and received wide acceptance. In his estimate, Buddhism had at one time 'nearly swallowed up two-thirds of the population of India.' In his famous lecture entitled 'Buddhistic India,' Vivekananda described Buddhism as 'the first historical outburst of a world religion,' as 'one of the tremendous cataclysms of the world' which still 'has the largest number of followers of any religion.'[4]

One of the criticisms of Buddhism he has offered is that it attracted too many able men who went out of the society to live in monasteries; 'who were left to procreate progeny, to continue the race? Only the weaklings. All the strong and vigorous minds went out. And then came national decay by the sheer loss of vigour.[1] One recalls Edward Gibbon's indictment on Christianity that it was the chief cause of the decline of the Roman Empire. However, this analogy is inept in the case of India and Buddhism, and Vivekananda is not right in attributing 'national decay' to the growth of monasteries. The Indian national decay and decline of Indian thought and culture began after 1000 AD when there were practically no Buddhist monasteries in India. It will not be an exaggeration to say that India's national and cultural decline began with the practical disappearance of Buddhism and re-establishment of Brahmanism as 'Hinduism' in the sub-continent. The process was accelerated by the Muslim conquest. At one place[2] the Swami says that 'the one great cause of the downfall and degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming into contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.'

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[1] *Complete Works*, II, p. 485; III, p. 441.
[2] ibid, III, p. 532.
[3] ibid, p. 530.
[4] ibid, pp. 511-12.

LIBERATOR OF MANKIND

Buddhism as a rational system of thought sought to liberate mankind from the fear of gods; as a moral system it stressed the necessity of personal piety and good deeds; as a way of life it trained men and women in the art of self-control and suppressing passions. As Vivekananda points out, Buddhism shook the thrones of 'oblation-eating gods and brought them down from their heavenly positions.'[3] The thinking minds will always remember the Buddha as the only great religious teacher who freed us 'not only from the bondage of our false selves but from dependence on the invisible being or beings called God or gods.'[4]

DECLINE OF PRIESTLY POWER

One of the permanent effects of Buddhism was the decline and fall of the power and influence of brāhmaṇas and priestly families in India. The decline of sacrificial and ceremonial religion of the Vedic texts dealt a blow to priestly profession. The growth and popularity of Buddhist ideas and ideals created a very unfavourable social and economic situation for the brāhmaṇas. Attempts were made by them from time to time to re-establish their supremacy and privileged position especially during the rule of the Gupta-Vardhanas and the so-called Rājapūtas of early medieval period. These attempts succeeded, in part, due to the decline of Buddhism, in part, due to the crusades of Kumārila and Śaṃkara in the second half of the first millennium of the Christian era. The establishment of the Muslim rule, however, finally put an end to priestly power of the brāhmaṇas. Swami Vivekananda had a better understanding of these social effects of the spread of Buddhism in India than some modern historians.[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 533.
[2] ibid, IV, p. 365.
[3] ibid, IV, p. 443.
[4] ibid, VIII, p. 105.

REFINEMENT OF BRAHMANISM

According to modern Hindus, the Buddha's great contribution was to the reformation of Vedic religion and society. So Radhakrishnan informs us that 'The Buddha's main object was to bring about a reformation in religious practices and return to the basic principles. The Buddha was accepted as an *avatāra* who reclaimed Hindus from sanguinary rites and erroneous practices and purified their religion of the numerous abuses which had crept into it.'[2] The great modern Hindus have easily recognized the Buddha as 'a maker of modern Hinduism.' In this they are only following Vivekananda and repeating his well considered view.

In our opinion, it is not quite correct to say that the Buddha's 'main object' was to reform the Vedic religion; that is a jargon of the upholders of reform theory. The main object of the Buddha was to teach the Dharma to men and women; liberation or *mukti* from the bonds of ignorance, craving, and selfishness was the one central theme of that Dharma which is described as a blessing in the beginning, a blessing in the middle, and a blessing in the end. In course of His long career as a Teacher of the Dharma, His countrymen, priests and philosophers, rulers and warriors, and householders of all ranks and classes, felt the force of His sublime and humane message. The cruel and superstitious features of Vedic-Brahmanie religion naturally came up for criticism when He set forth a religion of compassion and reason. In other words, one of the important *effects* of the Buddha's teaching was the reform of Vedic-Brahmanic religion. As Vivekananda has so often pointed out, rituals requiring offerings of living beings, the hereditary castes, the exclusive priesthood, and superstitious polytheisitic cults steadily lost their hold on the classes and masses of India. The far-reaching and revolutionary consequences of these changes can be seen in the transformed Brahmanism of the Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata.* R.C. Hazra and P.V. Kane have shown how the learned, brāhmaṇas and authors of the Dharmaśāstras and the Purāṇas had to modify and change their traditional views and Vedic theories in the wake of the mounting tide of Buddhistic revolution.[1]

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[1] *Complete Works*, IV, pp. 447f.; III, p. 525.

[2] *2500 Years of Buddhism*, Foreword, p. xiii.

But the conservatism and persistence of Brahmanical tradition have been indeed remarkable. It is possible that the Buddhist leaders had for some centuries the majority of the Indian people in their following. Nevertheless, as our Swami perceptively remarks: 'The older forces were never entirely pacified, but they underwent a good deal of modification during the centuries of Buddhist supremacy.'[2] And the persistent brāhmaṇas who loved their Vedas and their enviable social position, did not stop their efforts to re-establish their lost supremacy in society and leadership in thought. As Will Durant has remarked, 'slowly the patient and tenacious brāhmaṇas recaptured influence and imperial patronage; and the success of the youthful philosopher Shankara in restoring the authority of the Vedas as the basis of Hindu thought put an end to the intellectual leadership of the Buddhists in India. Survivers from Arab onslaught were re-absorbed into Hinduism.'[3]

TRANSFORMATION OF ORTHODOXY

The *modus operandi* adopted by the Brahmanical authors and theologians in their endeavour to preserve their power and influence necessarily involved a wholesale transformation of their orthodoxy. Some aspects of this transformation of Brahmanism into Hinduism are described by some historians in the following words:

'Jainism and Buddhism are reprobated, but their substitution of the eschatological problem for the ontological is adopted. Since the popular religions cannot be excluded, they are accepted, being given a faintly Vedic aspect either by the device of the *avatārs* or by means of imaginary lines of *rishis*, pundits, and *gurus*, traced back to the mythical days of infallible certainties, the Gold Age. The more that strange novelties are consecrated as authentic, the more Purāṇas are composed, in which the new is linked to the old by quite unfounded ancient 'histories.'

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[1] R.C. Hazra, *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, Dacca, 1940; P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, V, part 2, sections IV-V.

[2] *Complete Works*, VI, p. 161.

[3] Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization, I, Our Oriental Heritage*, New York, 1954, p. 505.

Without a doubt, a place would have been found in orthodoxy even for the Buddhists, if they had not scorned caste and disputed the divinity of the Brahman. The epics give the impression of a hotch-potch, in which all the different elements of a chaotic civilization have been heaped together, to be saved when invaders, Parthian or Śaka, entered the country. So too the brāhmaṇas, to preserve their pre-eminent position, were compelled to set the stamp of orthodoxy wholesale on many religious and social elements which were as alien to the matter of the brāhmaṇas as to that of the Vedas.'[1]

The historical fact of assimilation of Buddhism by Brahmanism has been stated in a forthright manner by Arnold Toynbee. He has observed that 'Hinduism despoiled a senile Buddhist philosophy in order to acquire for itself the weapons with which it drove its philosophical rival out of their common homeland in the Indic World.'[2]

KINDNESS AND CHARITY

One of the epithets of the Buddha is 'the Great Compassionate One' (*mahākāruṇika*). Moved by supreme compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), the Tathāgata set in motion the Wheel of Righteousness (*dharma-cakra*). The principle of inoffensiveness (*ahiṃsā*) which in essence is identical with friendliness (*maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*), is placed at the head of the list of Buddhist moral rules. 'Buddhism' says P.V. Bapat, 'is a religion of kindness, humanity and equality.'[3] Indeed, Āryadeva, a Buddhist philosopher of the second century AD, tells us that the Buddha's Dharma can be summed up in two words: *ahiṃsā* (inoffensiveness, compassion, love) and Nirvāṇa.[4]

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[1] Paul Masson-Oursel, Helena Willman Grabowska and Phillippe Stern, *Ancient India and Indian Civilization*, London, 1967, pp. 178-79.

[2] Arnold J. Toynbee, op. cit., p. 544.

[3] P.V. Bapat, *2500 Years of Buddhism*, pp. 1 and 415.

[4] *Catuḥśataka*, XII. 23 ed. V. Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1931.

According to Vivekananda, the spirit of compassion or kindness is the one outstanding contribution of the Buddhist religion. The 'Buddha taught kindness towards lower beings; and since then there has not been a sect in India that has not taught the charity to all beings, even to animals. This kindness, this mercy, this charity—greater than any doctrine—are what Buddhism left to us.'[1] On the other hand, with the decline of Buddhism in India, 'Brahmanism lost something—that reforming zeal, that wonderful sympathy and charity for everybody, that wonderful leaven which Buddhism had brought to the masses and which had rendered Indian society so great . . . '[2]

BUDDHISM AND VIVEKANANDA'S THOUGHT

A study of the *Complete Works* of Swami Vivekananda shows how deeply his life and work were imbued with Buddhist ideas and ideals. We must remember that he is *a great authority* not only on the Vedānta but also on Hinduism as a whole. He has been described as 'a Hindu mind of the highest order.' His views about Buddhism have been accepted by S. Radhakrishnan and quoted by P.V. Kane, two of the most famous Hindu scholars of our century.

It is to be regretted that while many modern Hindu writers have often quoted or paraphrased such statements of this great Swami as seek to propagate the improbable hypothesis of the Vedic origin of Buddhism, or those that seek to make it responsible for the darker aspects of Tāntrikism, very seldom, if ever, any Hindu writer has cited even one passage from those portions which praise the Buddha and highlight the greatness of Buddhism.

The present writer has no doubt that the Swami did not share, in the least, the traditional Brahmanical prejudice against Buddhism. He was not being diplomatic in his attitude to Buddhism; he meant what he said and he seriously believed in what he said and wrote. The fact that the Buddha's personality had a tremendous and singular appeal to him and that Buddhism had influenced his thought to a great extent needs no argument. Almost every third page of the volumes of his *Complete Works* bears the stamp of Buddhist thought. Much of this has been discussed in the preceding pages of this book. Here we will draw attention to some of his views which are Buddhistic as much as Vedantic.

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[1] *Complete Works*, VIII, p. 103.
[2] ibid, I, p. 23.

The classical Buddhist doctrine of flux: *yaṃ kiñci samudaya dhammaṃ, sabbaṃ taṃ nirodha dhammaṃ*, 'whatsoever is a rising thing, that is a ceasing thing,'[1] and the tenet that all the phenomena are compounded (*saṃskṛta*) things, are stated in the following words: 'Everything mutable is a compound, and everything compound must undergo that change which is called destruction.'[2] Then again, 'everything is evanescent. Enjoyment, misery, luxury, wealth, power, and poverty, even life itself, are all evanescent'[3] echoes the doctrine of impermanence (*anityatā*). He quotes the *Lalitavistara*, one of the earliest biographies of the Buddha, and says: 'there is the tremendous fact of death. The whole world is going towards death, everything dies.'[4] The Buddha says: *upanīyati kho, brāhmaṇā, ayaṃ loko jarāya byādhinā maraṇena*, 'this world is being led, brāhmaṇas, by old age, disease, and death.'[5]

Although he adhered to the *ātmavāda* tradition of India, the doctrine of 'not-self' (*anātma*) had the greatest impact on his ethical thought. It is the Buddhist philosophy of perception of the truth of not-self (*nairātmya-darśana*), the self-denying asceticism of Buddhism, that made the Swami most eloquent most frequently. 'Ethics always says, 'not I, but thou.' Its motto is, 'not self, but non-self.' 'The vain ideas of individualism . . . have to be given up . . . Perfect self-annihilation is the ideal of ethics.'[6] This is the teaching of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. Renunciation is, says the Swami, the only path to religion. 'Renounce and give up.' 'Selfishness is the chief sin.' Unselfishness is the best of religion.' Renunciation is 'the banner of India,' 'the land of Buddha.' 'Nothing can be done without renunciation . . . Have *vairāgya*. Throw away everything, even your own salvation, and go and help others.'[7] The Buddhists will easily recognize in these pithy sayings the ideals of a Bodhisattva.

The first Holy Truth concerning *duḥkha*, suffering, is the point of departure in all Indian soteriologies. 'What an amount of misery there is in this world,' exclaims Vivekananda.[1] Again, 'Life is full of ills, the world is full of evils; that is a fact no one who is old enough to know the world can deny'[2]; *sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ asti*, 'all (this) is suffering.' Living beings have shed more tears in the *saṃsāra* than all the waters of the four great oceans.[3] The Buddha said that His teaching was concerned with *duḥkha* and the end of *duḥkha*. 'We are miserable through delusion. Give up the delusion, and the whole thing vanishes.'[4] We recall the Buddhist formula: 'the volitional forces are dependent on spiritual blindness, with the cessation of spiritual blindness, the volitional forces also cease.'[5] The students of the Vijñānavāda will feel at home here: 'All knowledge that we have in the world, where did it come from? It was within us. What knowledge is outside? None'[6]

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[1] *Dīghanikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, p. 143.

[2] *Complete Works*, I, p. 7.

[3] ibid, II, p. 71. [4] ibid, II, p. 92.

[5] *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Nalanda edn., I, p. 143.

[6] *Complete Works*, II, pp. 62-63. [7] ibid, III, pp. 143, 430-31.

As the *Dhammapada*[7] has it *sabba dānaṃ dhamma dānaṃ jināti*, the gift of the Dharma excells all the other gifts,' so the Swami says, 'The highest of gifts is the giving of spiritual knowledge.'[8] What Vivekananda considered to be 'the ideal of the Hindu race,' namely 'the ideal Brahminness in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present'[9] is, in fact set forth in greater detail in the *Dhammapada*,[10] *brāhmaṇavagga* than in any Brahmanical or Vedantic book. At one place he defines 'Jñāna' (knowledge) as 'creedlessness' (V. 272): this is the supreme knowledge free from all discrimination. Let us recall Nāgārjuna's view in which it is stressed that the true Wisdom or Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) consists in the eradication of all views and beliefs.[11]

BUDDHISM, JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Edwin Arnold's description of the Buddha as 'the Light of Asia' is eminently meaningful and suggestive. A.L. Basham remarks, that 'Even if judged only by his posthumous effects on the world at large he was certainly the greatest man to have been born in India.'[1] The 'effects' of the Buddha's teachings in the world at large have never been thoroughly studied. It is possible to say that Buddhism seems to have exerted a considerable influence on the history of rational and moral ideas both in the east and the west. The legacy of Buddhism in several Asian lands has been studied by some modern scholars. Its role in the Western world is little known. When Radhakrishnan says that 'Gautama Buddha is the voice of Asia, he is the conscience of the world,'[2] he is perhaps suggesting that the message of the Buddha embodies the spiritual aspirations of the Asian peoples and that it has a universal appeal.

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[1] *Complete Works*, II, p. 100. [2] ibid, II, p. 144.

[3] See the *Book of the Kindred Savings*. [4] ibid, II, p. 198.

[5] Cf. *Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā*, Darbhanga, 1960, pp. 186, 208.

[6] Vide the *Laṃkāvatārasūtra*, Darbhanga, 1963, chapter 10; D.T. Suzuki's *Studies in the Lankāvatārasūtra*, London, 1968, pp. 241ff. *Complete Works*, II, p. 339.

[7] verse 354. [8] *Complete Works*, III, p. 133. [9] ibid, III, p. 197.

[10] Chapter XXVI, *brāhmaṇa Vagga*.

[11] *Madhyamakaśāstra*, XIII. 8. *śūnyatā sarva dṛṣṭīnām proktāḥniḥsaraṇaṃjinaiḥ*; *Catuḥśataka*, II, 21: *sarvasaṅkalpa hānāya śūnyatā-amṛta deśanā.*

Swami Vivekananda has expressed a definite opinion on the little-known subject of the contact between Buddhism and Christianity. Here we propose to summarize briefly the already well-known evidence and the opinions of some modern scholars on the subject.

'Buddhism,' the Swami has declared, is 'historically the most important religion . . . There is no civilization on which its effect has not been felt in some way or other.'[3] At another place he remarked that Buddhism 'has exerted a great influence on Christianity, as the very teachings of Christ could be traced back to those of Buddha . . . Christianity is the direct offspring of Buddhism just as the earliest heresy in the Christian religion—the Manichaean heresy—is now universally regarded as the teaching of a sect of Buddhists. But there is more evidence that Christianity is founded in Buddhism. We find it in the recently discovered inscription from the reign of Emperor Aśoka of India, about 300 BC, who made treaties with all the Grecian kings, and whose missionaries disseminated in those very parts, where centuries after, Christianity flourished, the principles of the Buddhistic religion.'[4] In the course of his lecture on 'Buddhistic India,' Vivekananda told his American audience on February 2, 1900 AD the following: 'A good deal of Buddhism entered into Asia Minor. It was a constant fight at one time whether the Buddhists would prevail or the later sects of

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[1] A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*, New York, 1954, p. 256; Cp. Will Durant, op. cit., p. 434, who refers to the Buddha as the 'most famous of Hindu saints.'

[2] S. Radhakrishnan, *Occasional Speeches and Writings 1952-54*, Delhi, 1960, p. 278.

[3] *Complete Works*, VIII, p. 92.

[4] ibid, II, pp. 510-11; cf. also ibid, pp. 481, 484.

Christians. The Gnostics and the other sects of early Christians were more or less Buddhistic in their tendencies, and all these got fused up in that wonderful city of Alexandria, and out of the fusion under Roman law came Christianity.'[1]

These are very remarkable statements indeed; the modern American scholars of Christian history do not seem to have taken these statements seriously. It is possible that to most of the Christian theologians and church historians these views of Vivekananda may have appeared as quite incredible.

The main source of authority for the Swami in this matter was the celebrated Rock Edict No XIII of the Buddhist Emperor Aśoka. In this Edict we are told that he had spread Dharma in the kingdom of Antiochus, and beyond the kingdom of Antiochus in the four kingdoms of Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas, and Alexander. It is well known that these Hellenistic kings ruled over West Asia, Egypt, Macedonia, Cyrene, and Epirus.[2] The 'Greek King' (*yonarāja*) Antiochus and his western neighbours are alluded to again in Rock Edict No II, and the Emperor claims to have established hospitals and medicinal gardens for the use of human beings as well as animals in these states ruled by the Yavanas.

This epigraphic evidence is supported by literary evidence also. The *Mahāvaṃsa* records that the Buddhist sage who went to preach in the Greek Kingdom was called Mahārakṣita. He delivered among the Greeks the discourse (*sūtra*) called the *Kālakārāmasutta*; as a result of this one hundred and seventy thousand living beings attained the reward of the holy life, and ten thousand persons received the monastic ordination (*pravrajyā*). The text also mentions a Greek Buddhist saint named Dharmarakṣita who preached in Western India.[3] Thus the conversion of a large number of Greeks of Western Asia to Buddhist faith is recorded in inscriptions as well as in Pali texts. The silence of contemporary Greek and Latin literature about these conversions is no more surprising than the absence of any mention of Alexander's invasion of India in Indian texts.

Three important modern works which pointed out the fact of contact between Buddhism and the religions of West Asian origin, especially between Buddhism and Christianity, are those of A.J. Edmunds and M. Anesaki, Flinders Petrie, and A. Lillie.[1] Several valuable books dealing with Gnosticism, the Essenes and the Qumran texts have appeared in the United States of America in recent years. I refer to the works of Hans Jonas, Robert Grant, Helmer Ringgren, Dupont-Sommer, and Frank M. Cross.[2] These scholars are either wholly unaware of or have deliberately neglected any reference to ascetic practices and monastic institutions of Buddhism in their treatment of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the origins of Christianity. In our view, an elementary knowledge of the history and the diffusion of Buddhist ideas is of considerable value for a student of Gnosticism, Jewish asceticism, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Manichaeism. The views of Swami Vivekananda, quoted above, are perhaps a challenge to the historians of Hellenistic, Judaic and Christian religious thought; the present writer does not think that these views of the Swami are based on careful study and research. It is quite likely that ascetic ideas had an independent origin in the Mediterranean region, but this has to be established by scholarship community..The available evidence shows that these ideas perhaps travelled from India towards the West and that they were of Buddhist origin.

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[1] *Complete Works*, III, p. 512.

[2] See Radhagovinda Basak, *Aśokan Inscriptions*, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 63-73, Edict no. XIII.

[3] *Mahāvaṃsa*, ch. XII, verses 34, 39, ed. by R.D. Vadekar, Bombay, 1959.

In 1970, Andre Dupont-Sommer of Paris was reported to have come to the conclusion that the Jewish monastics drew inspiration from Buddhist monastic ideas. This view is based on his study of an inscription of Aśoka in Aramaic said to have been discovered in 1969 by Mr. and Mrs Jean Bourgeois near Laghman in Afghanistan. The inscription refers to Tadmor identified with Palmyra in Syria and lays down the rule of non-killing. It will be recalled that several inscriptions of Aśoka, including a bilingual one, in Greek and Aramaic, found from Kandhār in Afghanistan, also suggest the diffusion of Buddhistic ideas among those people of

[1] Albert J. Edmunds and M. Anesaki, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, 3rd edn., Tokyo, 1905; Flinders Petrie, *Personal Religion in Egypt before Christianity*, London, 1909; A Lillie, *India in Primitive Christianity*, 2nd edn., London, 1909.

[2] Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, 2nd edn., Boston, 1967; Robert M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, New York, 1966; Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*. Philadelphia, 1963; A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, New York, 1967; and Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, New York, 1961.

West Asia who spoke these languages. The edict referring to Tadmor was issued in the tenth year of Priyadarśin Aśoka. If the missions dispatched by Aśoka reached the Mediterranean region, they must have spread word about the Buddhistic communities of monks. 'Shortly afterward,' observes Dupont-Sommer, 'in the second century BC one sees appearing within the Jewish world robust institutions of the monastic type, based like the Buddhistic monastic communities, on celibacy, poverty, obedience: I refer to the Essenes of Palestine and the Theraputae of Alexandria.'[1] The word *Theraputae* suggests some correspondence in sound and spelling with the word *Theravāda*. The Pali texts which speak of the westward journey of Buddhism under the patronage of Aśoka, belong to the Theravāda tradition.

India's cultural and commercial contacts with West Asia, Europe and Egypt in pre-Christian centuries are known from several sources of Indian, European and Egyptian origin. The *Bāveru Jātaka* mentions Indian merchants going to Babylon. Indian soldiers from the Punjab are known to have fought against the Greek city-states in the army of Persian ruler Xerxes. Solomon is reported to have imported Indian products. Candragupta Maurya had matrimonial and diplomatic relations with Seleucus Nicatar. Bindusāra is known to have shown interest in Greek philosophy. Emperor Aśoka had sent Buddhist missionaries not only with Buddhist doctrines and practices to Europe but also had established hospitals in Greek states of Hellenistic age. An Indian tribe from the Punjab is known to have migrated to Armenia via Parthia in the second century BC. Augustus had received an Indian embassy in *circa* 17 BC at Athens; one of the members of this embassy was an 'ascetic teacher' either of Buddhist, Jinist, or Brahmanical affiliation. He is called 'Zarmanochegas' or *śramaṇācārya* and is said to have committed suicide by burning himself publicly at Athens. After the Christian era, Apolloneous and Plotinus are known to have looked to India as the home of higher wisdom.

The archaeological evidence from Egypt deserves notice here. Flinders Petrie had pointed out as early as 1908 that Indian, especially Buddhist festivals and practices were well known during the

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[1] *The New York Times*, April 26, 1970, p. 12.

[2] Some of these evidences are discussed in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1898, p. 875; 1904, p. 399; and 1907, p. 968.

Ptolemaic period in Egypt when a number of Indians had settled there. A Ptolemaic grave-stone bears the Buddhist symbol, the *dharmacakra* or the sacred wheel. Another Ptolemaic sculpture shows the deity Horus seated on a lotus in characteristically Indian posture (*āsana*). The Hermetic writings also suggest link with Indian philosophy. Fragments of a text in Kanarese language (a form of the Prakrit) have also been seen on a papyrus of about 2nd century AD. All these antiquities show that Indians and their culture played an important part in the Hellenistic culture.

Prophet Mani (AD 3rd cen.) was an important bridge between Buddhism and Christianity. We are told that Mani claimed himself to be the third in the line of spiritual teachers; the first being the Buddha and second being Jesus Christ.[1]

Some western scholars have commented on the evidence summed up above. Charles Eliot is of the opinion that the Hermetic writings contain strong Indian influence for the statements such as 'I am thou and thou art I' are Vedantic and 'would not grow naturally out of Egyptian or Hellenistic religion.' Although the statement of Swami Vivekananda that 'Christianity is the direct offspring of Buddhism' is too radical to be true in its entirety, several Western scholars seem to acknowledge the influence of Buddhism on Christianity.

According to Charles Eliot, 'the doctrine of metempsychosis and ideal of ascetic life are echoes of India.' 'The idea that religious life consists in suppressing the passions which plays such a large part in Christian monasticism, can be traced not to any Jewish or European institution but to Egypt. Although monasticism spread quickly thence to Syria, it is admitted that the first Christian hermits and monasteries were Egyptian and there is some evidence for the existence there of pagan hermits. Egypt was a most religious country, but it does not appear that asceticism, celibacy or meditation formed part of its older religious life, and their appearance in Hellenistic times may be due to a wave of Asiatic influence starting originally from India.'[2]

The view published by Dupont-Sommer in 1970 had been expressed by Charles Eliot many years ago in the following words: 'The life followed by such communities as the Theraputae and

[1] Hans Jonas, op. cit., p. 230.

[2] Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, London, 1962, III, pp. 429-30.

Essenes is just such as might have been evolved by seekers after truth who were trying to put into practice in another country the religious ideals of India.'[1] It is possible to suggest that the Christian doctrines of love and compassion may also perhaps be regarded as echoes of Buddhist tenets of friendliness (*maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) so characteristic of early Buddhism.

A.L. Basham makes a more guarded observation when he says that 'The heterodox Jewish sect of the Essenes, which probably influenced early Christianity, followed monastic practices in some respects similar to those of Buddhism. The possibility of Indian influence on Neoplatonism and early Christianity cannot be ruled out.'[2] As for the remarkable parallels between the New Testament and the Pali texts collected in the Tripiṭaka, the reader is advised to see the *Buddhist and Christian Gospels* by Edmunds and Anesaki already referred to.

Reviewing Helmer Ringgren's book *Word and Wisdom*,[3] Edward Conze had pointed out in 1948 several remarkable 'parallels or coincidences' between *sophia* and *prajñā*.[4] But he expressed the view that 'from *circa* 200 BC onwards, two distinct civilizations, one in the mediterranean, the other in India, constructed a closely analogous set of ideas concerning wisdom, each one apparently independently, from its own cultural antecedents.'[5] Conze however fails to notice the well-known fact of the presence of Buddhist missionaries and ascetics in the mediterranean region before the second century BC. In the face of definite evidence of the presence of Buddhism in the Mediterranean we can hardly say that Judaism developed the system of *sophia* 'from its own cultural antecedents.' As a matter of fact, Conze is not justified in treating only the Mahāyāna conception of wisdom (*prajñā*) in the context of Gnosticism without taking into account Buddhist asceticism and Jewish asceticism. In a learned article on 'Buddhism and Gnosis,' Conze has tried to argue that the Mahāyāna notion of wisdom was influenced in some respects by Gnosticism.[6] It is possible that the Bud-

[1] Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, III, p. 438.

[2] A.L. Basham, op. cit., pp. 485-86. [3] Lund, 1947.

[4] *Oriental Art*, I, no. 4, This review has been reprinted in *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, pp. 207-09.

[5] ibid, p. 207.

[6] Edward Conze, 'Buddhism and Gnosis' in *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo*, Supplement to *Numen*, XVI, Leiden, 1967.

dhist ascetics who may have influenced Judaism and Gnosticism, may also have, in their turn, imbibed some Gnostic ideas; but while the Gnostic influence in the Mahāyāna has yet to be proved, the westward journey of early Buddhism and its presence in the Mediterranean is beyond doubt.

Several modern Western scholars have drawn our attention to remarkable-parallels based on actual contacts between Buddhist teaching and the thought of Dio Chrysostom, Hippolytus, Plotinus, Origen and Gregory of Nyasa.[1] More recently, Edgar Bruns has pointed out that 'John's thought shows some structural affinity to Mahāyāna Buddhism,' that the impact of Indian thought 'on the intellectual milieu of the Mediterranean world in the first century of our era' is undeniable, and that 'John's thought is more Buddhist than Gnostic' and that the author of the fourth Gospel 'was aware of Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine.'[2]

Students of the history of religion who subscribe to the approach of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda will perhaps find in the above 'affinities,' 'parallels' or 'coincidences' between Buddhism, Gnosticism, Judaism and Christianity some support for their view. We should like to conclude this very incomplete section on the relationship of Buddhism with the religions of West Asian origin with a quotation from Arnold J. Toynbee.

'The history of Religion,' says this doyen of historians, 'appears to be unitary and progressive by contrast with the multiplicity and repetitiveness of the histories of civilizations and this contrast in the time-dimension presents itself in the space-dimension as well; for Christianity and the other three higher religions surviving in the twentieth century of the Christian Era had a closer affinity among themselves than coeval civilizations had been apt to have with one another. This affinity was conspicuously close as between Christianity and the Mahāyāna, which shared the same vision of God as a self-sacrificing saviour. As for Islam and Hinduism, they too reflected insight into the nature of God which gave them a distinctive meaning and mission of their own. Islam was a reaffirmation of the unity of God against the apparent weakening of Christianity's hold on this important truth, and Hinduism reaffirmed the personality of God as an object of human devotion against an apparent denial of the existence of personality in the Primitive Buddhist system of philosophy. The four higher religions were four variations on a single theme.'[1] This, of course, is too simple a solution of the problem. The problem does not consist of 'a single theme'; the 'vision of God' is one theme; the other equally central theme is the attitude to the world, and in this second theme there is no room for such a simple harmony as Toynbee is eager to see.

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[1] See H. de Lubac, *Aspects of Buddhism*, London, 1953 and the works cited by Edgar Bruns at pp. 136-37 of his book noted below. Some works not referred to by Bruns but useful in this context are the following: H.C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, 6th edn., Calcutta, 1953. pp. 614-17; Charles Eliot, op. cit., III; A.L. Basham, op. cit., pp. 484-87; Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, pp. 210-42; and a most valuable section on 'Buddhist Literature and Universal Literature' by M. Winternitz in his *History of Indian Literature*, New Delhi, 1972, II, pp. 402-23.

[2] J. Edgar Bruns, *The Art and Thought of John*, New York, 1969, pp. 12-13; 88-89 and especially pp. 116-19.

BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM

The relationship between Buddhism and Hinduism has been discussed above mainly in the light of the Hindu views as expressed by Vivekananda. It will be good to conclude this book by pointing out some more facts concerning correspondence and rapprochement between the doctrines of two traditions. We shall confine these concluding pages to review of certain aspects of Buddhist legacy which have found a secure place in Hinduism and which are acknowledged by modern Hindus.

We have seen above that in certain Pali texts Consciousness (*vijñāna*) is described as 'invisible, infinite and shining everywhere'. A Upaniṣad text also speaks of Reality (*bhūta*) as 'infinite and limitless mass of consciousness'.[2] The description of liberated saints as freed from defilements (*kṣīṇadoṣa*) and as free from passions (*vītarāga*) given in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*[3] cannot fail to remind the reader of Buddhist. *arhats* who are regularly described as free from taints (*kṣīṇāsrava*). The *Bhagavadgītā*, that veritable text-book of Hindu religious thought and ethics, embodies a large body of Buddhist principles and practices, D.D. Kosambi, who places this text between 150-350 AD, says that the theory of perfection through a large succession of rebirths taught in the *Bhagavadgītā* 'is characteristically Buddhist' and that the *Bhagavadgītā*,[1] recited daily as prayers at Mahatma Gandhi's *āśrama*, 'would be impossible without Buddhism.'[2] In these verses the state of a person of 'stilled vision' or 'fixed understanding' (*sthitaprajña*) is described in detail. Any one acquainted with Buddhism will at once find out that this is the description of a monk of 'calmed thought' (*samāhita-citta*), the wise one who has transcended pairs of opposites and dwells wholly detached from the phenomena. The chapter concludes by saying that such a sage (*muni*) attains the 'holy Nirvāṇa' (*brahma-nirvāṇa*). The phrase *brahmanirvāṇa*[3] occurs several times and at one place Peace and Nirvāṇa are identified with God.

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[1] Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, II, abridgement by D.C. Somervell, p. 105.

[2] *Dīghanikāya*, I, p. 190; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II. 4.12.

[3] II. 1.5; III. 2.5.

Thus although, the *Bhagavadgītā* does not mention the Buddha as an *avatāra* of God, its author seems to have tacitly assumed Buddha's identity with Brahman or Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa or God. See for example, this verse :

Thus ever disciplining himself,
The man of discipline, with controlled mind,
To peace that culminates in nirvāṇa,
And rests in Me, attains.[4]

Who is this 'man of discipline' or *yogin* who attains Peace and Nirvāṇa through meditation? History knows only Śākyamuni as the first *yogin* who attained Nirvāṇa through yoga. The *Gītā* only adds that this Nirvāṇa is identical with God. In addition to the well known verses which describe the *sthitaprajña* and *brahma-nirvāṇa*, there are some striking verses which deal with 'Buddhist ideology' in what V.V. Gokhale calls 'pregnant yet unmistakable phrases.'[5] Below I quote two of these verses in Edgerton's translation :

Of what is not, no coming to be occurs,
No coming not to be occurs of what is;
But the dividing-line of both is seen,
Of these two, by those who see the truth.[6]

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[1] II. 55-72.

[2] D.D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*, p. 16.

[3] *Bhagavadgītā*, II. 72; V. 24-26; IV. 15, *śāntiṃ-nirvāṇaṃ*.

[4] *Bhagavadgītā*, VI. 15, translation by F. Edgerton.

[5] V.V. Gokhale, 'Krishna and the Buddhist Literature' in *The Cultural Forum*, New Delhi, April 1968, vol. 36, p. 73.

[6] *Bhagavadgītā*, II. 16.

Is this not a reference to the Buddha who taught the tenet of transcending the extreme views of existence (*bhāva*) and non-existence (*abhāva*) ? If so, 'those who see the truth' (*tattva-darśibhiḥ*) that lies beyond is (*asti*) and is-not (*nāsti*) are the teachers of the doctrine of conditioned coproduction (*pratītya-samutpāda*). Consider another verse :

Transcending these three strands,
That spring from the body, the embodied soul,
From birth, death, old age, and sorrow
Freed, attains deathlessness.[1]

The stress on *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-duḥkha* and the description of *vimukti* or Liberation as *amṛta* or Immortality are characteristically Buddhist.

According to V.V. Gokhale, 'The Buddhist approach has found a deeply sympathetic response in the Rāma Epic, unique for its dignified ethical standards, rigidly maintained in defiance of a tragic, human fate, as well as in another powerful branch of the Epic tradition, build around the ascetic Shiva, who with his sombre, pristine meditations is known to be as ancient as the Himālayas.'[2] V. Fausböll and Max Müller had, long ago, invited the attention of scholars to numerous parallells between passages belonging to the Pali Canon and the Brahmanical texts like the *Mahābhārata* and the *Manusmṛti*.[3] But we have no space here to dwell upon these parallels. A historical analysis of the contents of these Brahmanical texts shows that they were compiled mainly between BC 200 and 200 AD.

Two verses of the *Bhagavadgītā*,[4] are clearly echoes of the *Dhammapada*,.[5] The *Manusmṛti*,[6] is a recast of the *Dhammapada*.[7] The following verse in the *Dhammapada*[8] and the *Manusmṛti*,[9] reads like two versions of the same couplet : 'He will not find happiness after death who seeking his own happiness, punishes or kills the living beings who also long for happiness.'

The four stages of *dhyāna* or meditation mentioned repeatedly in the Pali texts are referred to once in the *mokṣa-dharma* section of the *Śāntiparvan* of the Great Epic, while the four sublime states of meditation (*brahma-vihāra*) found their way into the *Yogasūtra*. It is possible that the word *bhagavat*, 'Blessed One', was first used by the Buddhists for their Teacher. Later on it was adopted by the Bhāgavatas or Vaiṣṇavas as an epithet of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa.

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[1] *Bhagavadgītā*, XIV. 20 [2] V.V. Gokhale, op. cit.
[3] See *SBE*, X, *Dhammapada*, pp. 6, 16-17, 28-29, 33, 36-37 etc.
[4] VI. 5-6. [5] Verses 160, 165 and 379.
[6] II. 121. [7] Verse 109. [8] Verse 131. [9] V. 45.

The legends of Kapilamuni and the elements of his system, the Sāṃkhya, also form a bridge between Buddhism and Hinduism. The ideal of inoffensiveness (*ahiṃsā*), the corner-stone of all Śramanic ethics, is declared as the supreme religious doctrine (*ahiṃsā paramo dharmaḥ*) in the *Mahābhārata*. The brāhmaṇas accepted the Śramanic institution of *pravrajyā* or *saṃnyāsa* and made it the fourth stage (*āśrama*) in their scheme of life. They even composed a *Bhikṣusūtra* which, however, is no longer extant.

The practice of visiting the holy places (*tīrthas*) possibly originated with the Buddhists. In the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*, visit to the spots sanctified by the Buddha is recommended. In the Vedic texts a *tīrtha* was understood to mean a place where animal sacrifices were performed. But in the Epics and the Purāṇas, which teach the cult of *tīrtha yātrā* or pilgrimage, killing of animals in sacrifice in holy places is prohibited. The eighth chapter of the *Laṅkāvatārsūtra* perhaps contains the strongest exposition of vegetarianism which became a central feature of Vaiṣṇavism in medieval India.

The Buddhist doctrines of 'non-origination' (*ajātivāda*), of phenomenal world as illusion or mere appearance (*māyāvāda*), of twofold division of truth into ultimate (*paramārtha*) and temporal (*vyavahāra*), and of Reality (*tattva*) being without attributes (*nirguṇa*) and beyond fourfold description, have become so completely Vedantic that their origins have nearly been forgotten. One can multiply the list of the elements of what Toynbee calls the 'diverse Buddhistic philosophies that are part of the mental apparatus of a post-Buddhaic Hinduism.'[1] The strong Brahmanical love of synthesis found its best expression in its assimilation of Buddhism.

The present writer does not think that he is saying something which is quite new or unacceptable to modern enlightened Hindus. In order to strengthen the views summed up above, we may cite the opinions of some well-known Hindu scholars of Buddhism even though this involves some repetition of what has been said earlier in this book.

Radhakrishnan says, 'For us, in this country, the Buddha is an outstanding representative of our religious tradition. He left his footprints on the soil of India and his mark on the soul of the country with its habits and convictions. While the teaching of the Buddha assumed distinctive forms in the other countries of the world in conformity with their own tradition, here, in the home of the Buddha, it has entered into and become an integral part of our culture.'[1]

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[1] Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, I, abridgement by D.C. Somervell, p. 544.

P.V. Bapat has cited several instances from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* where the Buddhist standpoint against the killing of animals in sacrifices and the brāhmaṇa's claims to superiority on the ground of birth, are appreciated and accepted by the authors of these texts. He also points out that the Buddhist disregard for class or caste distinctions and emphasis on one's own good actions and therefore on the equality of social status became 'an integral part of medieval saints like Rāmānanda, Caitanya, Kabīr, Ekanātha and others (14th-17th century AD).'[2] We must add that these things became an integral part also of the teaching of Guru Nānak and Sikhism.

The eminent position attained by a large number of women in Buddhist history, viz., Khemā, Paṭācarā, Dhammadinnā, Sujātā, Visākhā, Sāmāvatī, Āmrapālī, Uppalavaṇṇā, Śubhā, Kisā, and Somā etc., shows that Buddhism had done much for the emancipation of women in Indian society. The same is true with regard to the Buddhist contribution towards the upliftment of *śūdras*. 'The liberal attitude shown by the Buddhists in throwing the doors wide open to all who wished to participate in religious life seems to have found general acceptance as the *Bhagavadgītā*[3] indicates. The worship of the images of deities became a common feature of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist religious practice. There was nothing in the practical life of a follower of the Buddha to which a non-Buddhist could take exception.

Thus, many aspects of the Buddhist religion came to be accepted by others and gradually no distinction remained. In the course of time, Buddhism was absorbed by the reformed religion of Hinduism.'[4]

'The doctrine of Māyā,' continues Bapat, 'and the two types of truths *samvṛtti-satya* (conventional truth) and *paramārtha-satya* (absolute truth) were also accepted by the Vedāntins. Sacrifices involving the slaughter of animals came to be condemned and were

[1] S. Radhakrishnan, *2500 Years of Buddhism*, p. xiv.

[2] P.V. Bapat, *2500 Years of Buddhism*, pp. 2-3.

[3] IX. 32, *strīyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te api yānti parāṃ gatiṃ*.

[4] P.V. Bapat, *2500 Years of Buddhism*, p. 6.

replaced by offerings of corn and grain. The *Mahābhārata*, the great Hindu epic, takes for granted the importance of personal conduct and refers to the Noble Eightfold Path. The Buddhist gods came to be respected and the Buddha himself came to be recognized as an Avatāra, a reincarnation of Viṣṇu'.[1]

Finally, he says that 'Buddhism has been a great force for peace in the world. The Buddha's policy of peace, self-sacrifice, kindness and charity finds an echo in the following lines from the *Mahābhārata*:

akrodhena jayet krodhaṃ asādhuṃ sādhunā jayet,
jayet kadaryaṃ dānena jayet satyena canṛtaṃ.

(One should conquer anger by cool-headedness, evil by good, miserliness by charity and falsehood by truth.[2]) This spirit moulded the lives of numerous saints in medieval India and the great minds of modern India, too, have been guided by the Buddha's teachings. The influence that the life of the Master exercised on Mahatma Gandhi is self-evident.'[3]

In order to strike the well-known fact that the above lines are a translation into Sanskrit from the Pali original we quote the verse from the *Dhammapada*, 223 :

akkodhena jine kodhaṃ asādhuṃ sādhunā jine
jine kadariyaṃ dānena saccena alīke vādinaṃ.

Max Müller rendered it as follows :

'Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good: let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth.'

N. Aiyaswami Sastri has observed that 'the Buddha's invaluable and positive contribution to Indian thought was in the realm of 'ethical standards called *śīla*.' 'In the Upaniṣads we find little about ethics.' He justly places the *Bhagavadgītā* 'in the post-Buddha period as it refers to Buddhist ideas'. He draws our attention to the following three points in respect of which this 'Hindu Bible' is indebted to Buddhism. 1. 'The instructions regarding proper food, timely sleep and timely waking (VI. 16-17) undoubtedly refer to some of the most important Buddhist teachings born of the Buddha's own personal experiences. 2. The opinion referred to in the lines 'some wise men say that, the wrongful action is to be abandoned' (XVIII.3) is exactly what the Buddha held. 'The *Aṅguttara*,[1] (I. 62; IV 183), for example, says that the Buddha confessed himself to be an advocate of inaction in the sense that he argued in favour of abandoning wrongful act. 3. The fourfold food, (*annaṃ caturvidhaṃ*) mentioned in verse XV. 14, corresponds to that of Buddhist literature (cf. Pali, *cattāro ahārā*).'[2]

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[1] *Bhāgavata*, I. 3.24.
[2] *Udyogaparvan*, critical edn., 30-58.
[3] P.V. Bapat, *2500 Years of Buddhism*, p. 417.

N. Aiyaswami Sastri is one of the few Hindu scholars who has noted the fact that the early Dharmaśāstra authors like 'Baudhāyana and Āpastamba do not speak highly of the *saṃnyāsa* stage, because they considered it alien to their creed.' He also notes Baudhāyana's theory of the Asura origin (i.e. non-Vedic origin) of *saṃnyāsa* or ascetic way of life, and of his rejection of *jñānavāda* or the doctrine of liberation by knowledge because it was against the injunction of the Vedic texts. 'From this it has been deduced that the two stages, *vānaprastha* and *saṃnyāsa*, originated among non-brāhmaṇa thinkers and were subsequently incorporated with the Āsramic theory of the brāhmaṇas.' We have already seen above that the 'non-brāhmaṇa thinkers' were the non-Vedic *munis* and *śramaṇas*.

The medieval brāhmaṇa commentators of the Dharmaśāstras introduced the liberal rule that an individual can embrace ascetic life when he considers himself fit for it. It is possible that 'this tradition was introduced under Buddhist influence.'

Buddhism taught that the Bodhisattvas should perform good deeds and pass the merits of those deeds on to all the living beings in order to help them attain Enlightenment. 'Some people believe that the Buddhist practice of dedicating merit to others has influenced the *Gītā's* teaching that action should be dedicated to God.' Aiyaswami also agrees with our view that Gauḍapāda's exposition of *advaitā* 'was influenced considerably by Nāgārjuna's method of argument . . . The non-origination theory, as applied to the phenomenal world, was unknown in Advaitism before Gauḍapāda . . . Therefore there is no denying the fact that Gauḍapāda must have taken the idea from Nāgārjuna and adopted it suitably to provide the Advaita doctrine with a firm foundation.' The Advaitins, following the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools of Buddhist thought, adhere to the doctrine of the māyā-like nature of the world. 'A great champion of the Advaita school, Śaṅkarācārya, took this weapon of the illusion theory and used it against his rival realists.' According to Aiyaswami, the term *māyā* has two meanings, *prakṛti* and illusion or illusory object. '*Māyā* in the former sense is common to the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*, and in the latter sense is peculiar to the Buddhists and the Advaitins.'[1] It may be noted in passing that the word *māyā* is found already in the *Ṛgveda* where its meaning is 'magical power,' for example, of assuming diverse forms.

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[1] N. Aiyaswami Sastri's reference to the Pali Text Society's edition may be seen in the Nalanda Nagari edition of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, I, pp. 59-60, and III, pp. 293-94.

[2] N. Aiyaswami Sastri, *2500 Years of Buddhism*, pp. 297, 300-01.

The Buddhist classification of good and bad actions into ten categories (*daśa-kuśala-karma* and *daśa-akuśala-karma*) seems to have influenced some Brahmanical authors. Aiyaswami has pointed out that the ten-fold division of action is mentioned also in the *Nyāyasūtra-bhāṣya*[2] and commented on in the *Nyāyavārtika* of Udyotakara. It is well known that the *Manusmṛti* also gives a ten-fold classification of virtuous things (*daśa-dharma*) and of unmeritorious actions. The idea of a *tridaṇḍin* (lit. an ascetic with a triple staff) is defined as one who is controlled in body, mind and speech; this clearly is a reflection of the Buddhist tenet of triple *saṃvara* viz. physical, mental, and vocal. The very word *daṇḍa* is peculiar to Buddhist and Jaina texts; see, for example, the *Daṇḍavagga* of the *Dhammapada*.[3] These instances show, remarks Aiyaswami, that 'Buddhism and Buddhist ideas influenced ancient Hindu writers. Such cases of the borrowing of ideas can be multiplied.'

In conclusion, this scholar observes that 'Buddhism has left a permanent mark on the culture of India. Its influence is visible on all sides. The Hindu faith has absorbed the best of its ethics. A new respect for life, kindness to animals, a sense of responsibility and an endeavour after higher life have been brought home to the Indian mind with renewed force. *Thanks to Buddhist influences, the Brahmanical systems have shed those parts of their religion which were irreconcilable with humanity and reason.*'[4]

In the first volume of *The Cultural Heritage of India*, it has been stated by some very distinguished Hindu scholars that 'in the history of Indian religions, Buddhism occupies a unique place'; this uniqueness consists in opening its doors to the Indians of all strata of the society, and in propagating Indian culture abroad. 'The cultural heritage of India was shared by most of the Asians through the grace of this religion.' The Buddha's Middle Path 'struck a new keynote in Indian religious life--a course midway between the rigorism of the Jains and the secularism of the sacrificial brāhmaṇas.' The grateful and enlightened Hindus are aware of Indian's debt to Buddhism, for, to quote their words, 'It has left an idelible mark on our cultural heritage, particularly on language and literature, logic and philosophy, and on moral values.'[1] The 'indelible mark' of Buddhism on Indian art and architecture, society and polity and on devotion and theology, let it be added here, has been pointed out by several historians of Indian culture.[2]

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[1] N. Aiyaswami Sastri in *2500 Years of Buddhism*, pp. 302-08.

[2] I. 1.17. [3] Verses 129-145.

[4] N. Aiyaswami Sastri in *25000 Years of Buddhism*, pp. 308-12.

Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya has invited attention of the students of Indian religions to the influence of the Bodhisattva ideal in Vaiṣṇavism, especially in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*[3] wherein Rantideva's prayer 'to undergo the sufferings of all beings' echoes the Bodhisattva's prayer such as is found in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Similar altruistic teaching is found in the *Mahanirvāṇa Tantra*[4] also.[5]

Some Buddhist survivals in Indian life and thought have been summed up in a most forceful and clear form by Satkari Mookerjee. He notes that Buddhism inspired and developed the spiritual and intellectual wealth of India and it made numerous and varied achievements in and outside India. He laments the decline of Buddhism in the land of its origin and warns the reader that it will be an error to imagine that Buddhism as a spiritual force is dead in India. 'It lives for certain, but in a form totally assimilated to Hinduism, so that it is not easily discernible to a casual observer . . . Buddhism may not exist in India as a separate sect; that is because *it has permeated the entire religious and philosophic thought of India and percolated into the deepest recesses of the religious mentality of the present-day Hindus. The consequence is that it will not be incorrect to say that every Hindu is a Buddhist, in spite of all outward appear-*

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[1] Bhattacharya, Haridas ed., *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Calcutta, 1958, I, pp. lviii-lxiii.

[2] cf. L.M. Joshi, *Aspects of Buddhism in Indian History*, Kandy, 1973.

[3] IX. 21.12. [4] II. 33.

[5] *The Cultural Heritage of India*, I, pp. 573-74.

ances to the contrary.'[1] This, indeed, is a most honest statement on the religious position of modern Hindus vis-a-vis Buddhism made since the time of Swami Vivekananda. 'India, that land of Buddha,' exclaimed the Swami in 1900 AD. She will remain so, we may be sure. For, as V.V. Gokhale has remarked, 'In the India of today, we see the spirit of ancient Buddhism, now attuned to the common way of life in the country, still harking back to its original, realistic purposes and still seeking for an awakening into a world of scientific inquiry, social equality and preservation of life on earth.'[2]

[1] *The Cultural Heritage of India*, I, p. 575.
[2] V.V. Gokhale, op. cit., p. 72.

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The present volume attempts an analysis and a systematic study of the traditional Brahmanical now called 'Hindu' attitude to Buddhism in India. The bulk of the volume, however, is devoted to an exposition of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism in the Indian context. The author follows a combined methodology, although he reviews several current approaches to the study of the history and doctrines of Buddhism.

Historical interactions and mutual favours between Brahmanic and Sramanic traditions, the role of Buddhism in the transformation of early Brahmanism into new Brahmanism and the evolution of 'Hinduism', the differences between Buddhism and Brahmanism/Hinduism, the differences between the ancient and medieval representatives and modern representatives of the Brahmanical tradition to Buddhism, Buddhist responses to this modern 'Hindu' attitude, and a review of Buddhist contributions to Indianism, are some of the subjects discussed in this book. One of the most important parts of the book deals with what the author has called 'God's Alternative in Buddhism'. An outline of Buddhology as a systematic study of the idea of Buddhahood, is one of the new themes discussed here. Another often neglected subject is a brief account of the possible Buddhist influences in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition.

The volume is offered as a basis for further study and scholarly dialogue in the area of intercultural and historical hermeneutics in the study of religion in South Asia.

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